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FRONTISPIECE.

THE CANTERBURY BELLS;

OR,

Scenes in the Belmont Family.

BY THE

AUTHOR OF "CHARLIE HUBERT."

"O lady! leave thy silken thread
And flowery tapestrie:
There's living roses on the bush,
And blossoms on the tree;
Stoop where thou wilt, thy careless hand
Some random bud will meet;
Thou canst not tread, but thou wilt find
The daisy at thy feet." Hood.

NEW-YORK:
ANSON D. F. RANDOLPH,
770 BROADWAY, CORNER OF 9TH ST.

1868.

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THE CANTERBURY BELLS;

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Scenes in the Belmont Family.

CHAPTER I.

It has been perhaps some sixty years, since, on an afternoon late in the winter, Mr. Ludwell rode up the long, winding road leading to his elegant and happy country home, Belmont; which was beautifully situated on the north-western bank of the Potomac, with the Virginia range of the Blue Ridge Mountains on one side, and the sharp peak of the Sugar Loaf on the other. When he had reached the marble lion which stood between two stately cedars, and was intended to serve the purpose of a horse-rack, he dismounted, and tossing carelessly the reins of his fine

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blooded steed to a young groom in livery, said:

"There Milo! see her well rubbed down before she's fed." Then turning, with an eager hurried step, he ascended the smooth green terrace; but paused again, as he approached the house, and looking back, gazed, with something of sadness in his face, through the long avenue of elms he had just passed. In a few moments stealthy footsteps advanced towards him, and he was aroused from his reverie, by the pressure of two little plump white arms, in full crimson merino sleeves, looped at the shoulder, which clasped him tightly round the neck, while a merry laugh rang in his ear and a sweet familiar voice exclaimed triumphantly:

"Ah! papa, *I* caught *you* this time, sir."

"And so you did, little gipsy — close enough prisoner you've made of me, too," he said, laughing, as he looked down proudly and fondly on the fair young face uplifted towards his own; then clasping affectionately the little maiden in his arms, he kissed warmly both lips and forehead.

Clara took possession first, of her father's riding-whip, and then of the hand which had held it, caressing the latter again and again as she tripped by his side answering and asking questions.

"What *were* you thinking of, papa, I wonder, just now, when I took you *so nicely* by surprise? I saw you from Aunt Annie's window, and slipped down, without saying a single word to any body, because I was determined I *would* have the first kiss."

"I was thinking, daughter, of poor sick mamma, and cousin Alice. Dr. Thompson says I must take them both on a sea-voyage, and I have to try to gain mamma's consent; yet we shall both be very sorry to leave our precious children for so many months."

Clara looked grave, instantly; but as they reached the front portico her face brightened again, and with a mischievous smile she said:

"O papa! I have such a good plan in my head, if you'll only help me about it! Won't you just pull your hat over your forehead, and turn up your cloak-collar, so that

it will hide your face a little? *There*, that's it exactly! only stoop a *little* more. Now, I don't think they'll know you at first, and I want to give mamma and the children a *good* surprise, for they don't expect you at all. You'll have to stand near this pillar when Uncle Simon comes to the door, and I'll ring the bell for him after I get in the hall myself."

Mr. Ludwell smilingly followed all her directions, and the little girl noiselessly opened the front-door and closed it behind her, then pulled the bell-wire until it gave a loud, long ring, which echoed through the house. Her mother, a very pale and delicate lady, started at this sound from her reclining posture on a settee, drawn up near the wide fireplace with its roaring wood-fire, and glanced around the room with a look of nervous timidity; while the children, who had been busily at play, were no less suddenly hushed and began to gather close about her. Clara entered almost at the same moment, and, with a look of mock surprise and wonder, whispered:

"Mamma, there's a gentleman at the door, and I'm sure he's asking for you. Yet there's no horse at the rack — where could he have come from?" As she finished speaking, a keen observer might have noticed the smile she was trying to suppress, and guessed that some roguish trick was about to be played off; but her mother did not, and was already becoming quite agitated as the steps of the supposed stranger were heard approaching the dining-room door. The arrival of a visitor at Belmont during the winter months was a rare occurrence, and the good lady felt very diffident of her powers of entertaining a gentleman guest in the absence of her husband, and in her very feeble health. In addition to this, her mind had seized upon the hint which Clara had thrown out respecting his *mysterious* advent. She, however, assumed as much as possible her usual dignity and composure of manner, and rose as Uncle Simon, opening very wide the door of the apartment, made one of his profound bows and announced:

"Capt. Peters! Madam."

No sooner, however, was the hat raised

from the visitor's head, than loud exclamations of joyful surprise were heard on all sides; and Uncle Simon stretched his eyes and gave a very broad grin, as Mr. Ludwell, throwing him his cloak, rushed by him in eager haste to reach his lady's side. "Excuse me, my darling"—he said bending over her fragile form and holding tenderly the white, cold hands which trembled in his. "This was all Clara's trick, but I ought to have been more thoughtful and remembered how easily your poor nerves are shocked now that you are so sick. O daughter! you see we've done wrong," he added, looking gravely at poor Clara, upon whose lips the bright smile had faded as soon as she saw how much her mother suffered, and the effort she was obliged to make to control her hysterical excitement.

"I am *so* sorry!" said the little girl softly, and stooping down beside her mother, she commenced bathing her temples with cologne, stopping every now and then to imprint a tender and penitent kiss.

"Never mind, my dear," said Mrs. Lud-

well, as soon as she could speak; "it's over now. I am sure you did not mean to distress me, but I'm such a poor foolish creature at present that you'll have to be more careful another time. However, it *is* such a *very* pleasant surprise to have dear papa back so much sooner than we expected, that it's not strange you forgot yourself. But how does it happen, Mr. Ludwell? Your last letter led me to suppose you would certainly not get off in *less* than a week, so it is really no wonder that your sudden appearance should have startled me."

"I am sure I am almost as much surprised myself, and quite overjoyed too; for it was hard to be away so long and leave you sick at home. An important witness in the case died, however, poor fellow! very suddenly day before yesterday, and the other side called for a postponement, in order to collect fresh evidence. I should have been here last night, but remained another day to see the doctor again about you and Allie. It only remains now for us to make some provision for these well members of the family, and

then you invalids are to be carried off *nolens volens*. Clara tells me that my poor dear little Alice has been suffering more than usual during the last few days."

"Yes but her mother thinks she's better again to-day. Annie is very anxious, however, about her, and has scarcely left her an hour at a time for the last two weeks."

"Run up, Clara, my darling, and tell your aunt that I am here, and will come up to see her as soon as she is ready to admit me—and do bring *little* Annie and Tommy down; those poor children, at least, should not stay so much in that sick-room," said Mr. Ludwell.

"Why, what's this young rogue after with his hands in my pocket?" he continued catching hold of Charlie, who had been busily engaged for some moments ransacking his father's coat-pockets. "You are a perfect little pick-pocket, sir. Here! give me back all those packages you've rifled me of, and if you wish to see what's for you, go tell Jackson to bring in my portmanteau."

"I'll bring it myself, in a trice!" said George, running after Charlie.

"And I'll help," said Henry, following more slowly.

When Clara had returned, bringing Annie and Tommy with her, the children gathered eagerly around the portmanteau; which Mr. Ludwell opened with affected precision, and Charlie watched him, as he slowly removed his own clothing, scarcely able to restrain his impatience for the expected signal for a general ransack. But just at this moment the heavy front-door creaked again on its hinges, and steps were heard in the hall.

"I do believe some body is coming, sure enough!" said George. "It's too bad! who can be going to interrupt us, I wonder?"

"Oh! fie for shame, Georgie!" said Clara, springing up. "Of course it can be no body but dear grandpa." A venerable old gentleman now entered, whom they all affectionately saluted as "grandpa," seeming delighted to see him too.

"It never rains but that it pours!" said Henry. "We are *especially* glad to see you, sir for papa's just come, and you see we are

searching his portmanteau to find what he has brought us from Washington."

"Well, my boy, I wish you a successful search," said the old gentleman kindly.

"But, Edward, how did you get off from your business in Washington? The case is not ended surely?"

"No; only interrupted by the death of poor Sawkins, the principal witness on the other side."

"Now, dear grandpa," said little Susy, "you must have your cocoa, and *I'll* make it, *mayn't* I? And then, while you smoke your pipe there by mamma, we'll go on unpacking papa's things."

"Why, you thoughtful little woman of — let me see, how many years, five or six?"

"Why, grandpa! you know that Charlie and Emmy are *six!* I'm *eight* years old and a *little* more," answered Susy almost indignantly.

"*Eighty!* did you say, my dear? I have made a grand mistake, then, and beg your pardon for having considered you among the children. Why, you are old enough to be

Charlie's great-grandmother instead of his playmate."

"O grandpa! you're so fond of teasing me. I didn't say eighty, I said eight, sir—but you won't tell me, if you'll have the cocoa."

Grandpa reached out his arm and caught the kind-hearted little creature whom he held for a moment or two between his knees, stroking her head, and calling her "poor old woman," whilst the others laughed heartily.

"Do make her tell how much more than eight she is, grandpa," said Henry, who prided himself on being eleven.

"One week, two days, five hours, and ten minutes, I guess," said grandpa.

"You've most said it right, hasn't he, Susy? Just one day more, and, I expect, half an hour and a quarter of a minute, and it would be *exactly* right," said Henry.

Susy only blushed, and hung her head.

"Well, you are a nice, kind old soul at least, my dear, and I'll be much obliged if you'll get my tobacco-pouch out of my sur-

tout-pocket, and tell Peter to fill my pipe and bring it in. The cocoa we'll put off for the present, and go immediately into that important investigation of a certain port-manteau, which has been waiting so long." As the old gentleman released Susy, he gave her a warm kiss, and stroked her smooth rosy cheek, saying, as she left the room:

"I'll tell you what, there are not many little Grandmother Susies in this cold, hard world."

"Here, grandpa, you shall have all these mean red-tape bundles to keep," said George presently. "You see, sir, papa has been cheating us dreadfully, making us choose which hand we'll take, when all the time he has nothing in either, except Somebody or other *vs.* Somebody else. Now I want to put all *law stuff* out of the way."

"Very well, Georgie, I'll help you. But what has that little rogue, Tommy Lee, got hold of to delight his sober little soul so much?"

"O grandpa! it's a *soldier*, this like my dear father used to be! Does you wemember when

he was a soldier, and had a sword like this one? It's up-stairs now in mother's closet, with his tane and umbwella, and all those things, that'll be mine one of those days, when I'm a bid man and a soldier of the twoss. *That's* what my mother says I must be; for my dear papa was *that* before he died."

"He was a brave man, my son, and died in his country's service," replied the old gentleman sadly.

"He did something tesides too, grandpa. I think he was *two* tinds of a soldier. Don't you know he loved Jesus and went to heaven when he died?"

"That's where all brave, honest men go, my child."

"Does bwave mean that they loves God, sir?"

"Not exactly."

"Oh! then; but they *must* do that too, sir!" said Tommy, shaking his head solemnly. "*Indeed* they must; for mother says our heavenly Father will not take any body to live with him that doesn't love him."

"Your mother is going to make a Puritan

preacher of you, poor child, I'm afraid!" said his grandfather, rising with a look of something like displeasure in his face as he walked to the window, where he stood for some moments looking out upon the surrounding landscape.

"Clara! try this dressy little cap upon mamma, and let us see if it does not become her pale face. I bought it of a little French milliner, who was sure 'if de lady was sick, she would just become dis cap exactly.' Yes, I believe she was right, mamma sets off the pretty cap. Now, daughter, here is a brooch for yourself; how does it suit? Amethyst and pearl."

"Oh! it's perfectly lovely, papa. I'm so much obliged to you, for it's just what I wanted. See, mamma! isn't it a beauty? But here's another just like it in the same box. Ah! I know that's for Annie. Isn't it, sir?"

"Yes; I thought you would like to have them alike, as you are to be sisters now."

"So we would, wouldn't we, Annie? Here, let me put yours in your collar, to see how pretty it looks!"

"Thank you, dear uncle; you are so kind to us always!" said Annie, putting up her mouth for a kiss. Her uncle patted her cheek and kissed her, saying: "You are a sweet, proper little girl; and now you may go with me to see your mother and my poor little Allie."

"Sister Allie was going to play on her dwitar," said Tommy.

"Here, Annie. You shall take her present up; it has probably just come in time," said Mr. Ludwell, putting into her hand a small parcel wrapped in soft blotting-paper.

"What is it?" asked Clara eagerly, laying her hand on her cousin's arm. "Papa, I'm going to peep in. Oh! a beautiful musical-box, all inlaid with mother-of-pearl. How exquisite it is! Alice will be perfectly charmed, I am sure."

"Yes, indeed she will; for she is so devoted to music," said Annie. "Dear uncle, you couldn't have chosen better if you'd looked the whole world over, and I am so much obliged for us both," she added, her eyes filling with grateful tears as she spoke.

The children gathered round to express their admiration, and beg for *just one* tune before it was carried up-stairs.

"No, no; Alice must hear it first," answered their father; "and she will let it play for you sometimes, when you go up to see her."

Grandpa said he must be present when she received it; so Annie got his cane and led the way through the long corridor and up the staircase, leading to her mother's chamber, which was in a wing of the house, and immediately over what the servants called "The Haunted Parlor." Mrs. Lee had for some reason selected this apartment for herself; but to Mr. Ludwell, the associations were so sad with this part of his house, that until his widowed sister came with her sick child to occupy it, he had not entered it for many years. And now, he heaved a deep sigh, as Annie, after first tapping gently, opened the door. Yet every thing looked bright and cheerful in there. The walls were painted blue, and from its many windows hung curtains of blue chintz, with small crimson figures and white muslin ones beneath. There

was a rich Turkey carpet of corresponding colors on the floor. Upon the high-carved mantle-piece were arranged several antique ornaments; the portrait of a handsome officer in uniform hung just over these. A screen drawn across one side of the room, did not entirely conceal the high-carved bedstead with its snowy counterpane and valance; before the blazing hickory fire was standing a vacant rocking-chair, and near this a round table, with a rich cloth cover, containing books, a writing-desk, and an unfinished drawing, which Annie had just left. In the recess of a bow-window, not far from the fire, there was a lounge, on which was reclining a lovely girl of some fifteen or sixteen summers. She was supported by several pillows, and leaning with her face turned towards the window, resting thoughtfully upon one hand. In the other she held a small book with one of her slender white fingers inserted between its leaves. The light of the setting sun came streaming in upon the locks of golden hair which hung about her face and neck, and kindled a soft glow on her pale cheeks;

while in her countenance shone a spiritual radiance which rivalled even this. There had been perfect stillness in the room for several minutes, and Mrs. Lee sat watching her daughter's face with deep emotion, having suffered her knitting to fall quietly in her lap. As soon, however, as Annie knocked, she rose and stepped forward to meet her father-in-law and brother. But Alice was so occupied with her own thoughts, that she was not conscious of their entrance, until Annie had touched her and said:

"Sister, grandpa and uncle have come up to see you, and you don't take any notice of them." Then she turned upon them a bright, beaming smile, and said playfully:

"That's only because they caught me *dreaming;* but dear grandpa and uncle know that I am always charmed to see them. Such a pleasant *surprise* too it is this evening! So you are both doubly welcome," she added, bending her slender, graceful throat to salute them.

"The rocking-chair is all ready for you, grandpa, so let me lay your cane here by my

guitar, while you *rest* after your long journey to our room."

After silently smoothing the locks on her temple, and watching her for a few moments with a look of the tenderest affection, the old gentleman began with forced gayety to rally her upon the sober expression of her countenance when he entered.

"What in the world is this you've been reading, my child? why, it made you look as thoughtful as if you were trying to penetrate the mysteries of the worlds beyond our own —studying Astronomy, I suppose," he said, taking as he spoke the book from her hand. "German! An old musty German book, I declare! No wonder you were puzzled. Ah! yes, I understand it all now."

Alice laughed a little, and then said seriously: "If you really wish me to, I will tell you, grandpa, what I was thinking of."

"Certainly I do, my dear; but in *English*, if you please!"

"Mamma has been reading to me this evening, in this old book of Tauler's; and one sweet but very simple thought of his seemed

to fasten itself upon my mind, and set my heart to longing for some of those good things which are to come by and by. He says: 'To a man who looks long at the sun, the sun imprints itself on every thing he sees; so is it with a man who looks much at God.' Now, while I was looking out here where the sunlight is making every thing so beautiful, I began to think how blessed it would be if we could keep looking up so steadily to the Sun of Righteousness as to have our hearts filled with the rays of his *spiritual* sunshine, and be constantly reflecting them to others. How bright our own pathway home would be, and how many would be enticed to join us on the way! But it made me sad when I began to remember how the shadows will keep creeping up between us and our sun, until I thought again of *by and by*, when God will be our light all the time; when the glory of his visible presence will be continually shining before our eyes. I may have looked grave, but I was very, very happy as I thought of these things. Perhaps we don't always show it when we are most happy; for I *almost*

realized, I do believe, just now, the joy of being in heaven. However, it is too soon yet, and it was only a dream. So, as I had to come back to this world again, it is very sweet to do so in the midst of kind and loving friends."

As she spoke she looked up as if for sympathy, with one of her peculiarly winning smiles, to the faces of those who were near her, but none seemed able to meet her eye. They turned sadly away, and there was a pause, until Annie, unfolding her little parcel, displayed the musical-box, saying:

"Look, sister, what uncle has brought you. Now you won't care so much about your guitar until you are stronger. See! it's all inlaid with mother-of-pearl. Clara and I think it's a *beauty!*"

Alice took it in her hand, and held it up with a look of delight.

"Now, uncle, you must tell me how I can show you how grateful I feel; for you so often make me say, 'Thank you, sir,' that I am afraid you are tired of hearing it," she said, smiling archly; then added more

seriously: "But I am most deeply grateful for your kindness, and love to remember who has promised to reward those who are kind to the widow and the fatherless."

Annie now wound up the little box and placed it on a small stand by her sister's couch, which held her Bible, Prayer-Book, a copy of the Olney Hymns, a glass of exquisite flowers, and, concealed by a snowy napkin, the vial and little china cup for her medicine. While it played, Alice leaned forward to catch its soft notes with a look of keen enjoyment, then turning to her uncle, she said:

"My heart will always sing a grateful accompaniment, dear uncle, and sometimes when I feel one of my long coughs coming on, I shall wind it up for dear mother's benefit; for I think she must get sadly wearied out with such ugly music."

CHAPTER II.

It had been arranged that a grand family-council should be held the next evening, to determine what measures were to be taken for the care and protection of the children, during their parents' absence from home; Their happiness being so much concerned in the question—those of them who were old enough to understand the proceeding, were promised that they should be present, and help the decision with their votes. As Mrs. Ludwell's indisposition confined her very much to her couch, which stood beside the great wide fire-place in the dining-room, this had become the usual place of general family resort. It was a large, cozy, comfortable, old-fashioned room, with a heavy cornice round the ceiling, and a centre-piece of rich moulding; the walls were painted green, with white chair and wash-boardings. There were four windows, from which hung curtains of green

and gold. The two in front were double, and commanded a beautiful view of the distant river, with the broad meadows spread out before it, and still further off, the mountain tops which bounded the horizon; while the remaining two at the side of the room opened up from the floor and led into the conservatory, where there was a choice collection of rare and beautiful exotics.

The mantle-piece, according to the fashion of the day, was very high, painted black and elaborately carved; on it stood a pair of tall silver candelabras, filled with candles of different colored wax, a pair of vases of exquisite china, some mineralogical specimens, and two miniature representations, in variegated marble, of the pyramids, or obelisks. Just over these curiosities was suspended an heirloom of great value; one of the Henries, said to be painted by Van Dyck. The features were singularly life-like in their expression, and the dress, of course, looked antique and fantastic enough. The servants were firmly fixed in their conviction, that it *could* talk, and that it had more than once

quitted its old black frame, and walked to the side-board to regale itself with the contents of the punch-bowl—scarcely a servant or child would, if they could help it, stay alone in the room with the "*scarey old thing*," even in broad daylight. Besides this, there was hung around the walls, a double row of family portraits, and, conspicuously placed in the midst of them, a large and handsomely framed copy of the "Declaration of Independence."

Next in importance came the great old mahogany side-board, with its high carved and pointed back. On this, in regular and methodical order, were placed first, a pair of handsome japanned knife-and-fork cases on each side; and between them a massive silver water-pitcher, perfectly plain, except on the side, where a little chased wreath encircled the family initials, with the crest and motto. In front of this was a small oval silver waiter, filled with goblets of cut glass; then came the *famous punch-bowl*, of richly colored India china, set in a wrought silver frame, holding also small cups of the same

metal, lined with gold. Another corner was occupied by a pair of decanters with some wine-glasses. And then, with the large silver tea and coffee-urns, the appointments of the side-board were complete.

An antique secretary stood in a corner of the room, and opposite to it the old parlor organ, with a high, round music-stool, covered with red leather, and thickly studded round with brass-headed nails.

The chairs had tall, straight backs, and wide, square seats covered with green cloth; two of larger dimensions than the rest were furnished with arms, surmounted with curiously wrought ebony knobs, and were placed on each side of the fire-place for grandpa and papa when they felt inclined to occupy them. Before grandpa's stood a wide screen of gay-colored tapestry in a mahogany frame, inlaid with ebony and satin-wood.

On the evening of the grand discussion, which was to take place immediately after tea, the bright round table was drawn at early candle-light, into the middle of the floor. It had no cloth, but its polished sur-

face reflected back like a mirror its comfortable arrangements for tea. A vase of fresh flowers occupied the centre, with silver candle-sticks, holding candles of colored wax on each side. The tea-waiter glittered with its beautifully kept utensils; the coffee-urn sent forth its aromatic steam, and the wrought-silver kettle hissed over the soap-stone heater.

Clara, with her hand resting upon its handle, had made more than one smiling gesture of impatience at being detained from performing the duties of her deputed office at the head of the table, of which she was not a little proud, by the political discussion which engrossed her father and grandfather, making them entirely disregardful of their summons to the tea-table.

Uncle Simon, in his grave livery and demure countenance, was duly posted at the back of her chair, ready also at a moment's warning, to begin his official duties: while Jackson stood at the lower end, evidently on the *qui vive* to place the little blue India china plates which were in the plate-warmer at the fire. And "Mammy" awaited, with

baby Phebe in her arms and the child's well-filled plate and silver mug in her hand, an opportunity for the little lady to bid good night! and retire gloriously from the field.

Little black Dinah was seated on a low stool against the wall, knitting with steady and careful precision, in spite of the sly and waggish Charlie who was playing all manner of mischievous tricks on her, snapping her yarn, throwing his kitten in her face, or trying to jerk the long stocking from her fingers, only eliciting, however, a grummer look with a toss of the head, and the occasional threatening exclamation: "Mas' Charlie, better be done dat now! I tell missus, mun!"

Mrs. Lee's entrance into the room presently put an end to the suspense of all who were anxious for the evening meal to begin; for, recognizing the claim which her past sorrow and that which now threatened her afresh, gave her to their peculiar tenderness and respect, both gentlemen instantly ceased their spirited dialogue, and moved back to make room for her at the fire.

"We are always glad to welcome you down-stairs, my dear!" said General Lee.

"Yes," said Mr. Ludwell, with affectionate playfulness; "for she is determined we shall find that her moments in our society are like angel's visits in more than one sense."

"Oh! I hope you have not waited tea for *me!*" she answered glancing at the vacant table. "I was detained unavoidably; but sent to beg you would not wait, and expected to take mine quite alone by this time."

"No," said Mrs. Ludwell, smiling. "You are indebted to father and Mr. Ludwell for your *disappointment.* They have been so much engaged with their Federalism, that it was impossible to make them aware of the facts, that we were waiting, and the bread was spoiling; but we shall certainly all sit down with more zest for having you with us."

"Well, well; we won't deserve your scold ing any longer, my love," said Mr. Ludwell, leading his sister to her seat at Clara's right hand.

As soon as grandpa had taken his place, the children all followed his example, and

with graceful vivacity the merry jest and lively chat were soon passing round the happy circle, only *one* heart pausing to acknowledge from whose bountiful goodness so many blessings had proceeded.

"Where is Tommy to-night, Aunt?" asked the thoughtful little Susy, as Mrs. Lee raised her head, after her silent thanksgiving.

"I left him singing hymns to his sister Alice, and telling her stories; very much enchanted with the notion of entertaining her during our absence."

"Dear little fellow! It would be hard to find a sweeter companion, I think," said Mrs. Ludwell.

"Very clever little boy, certainly;" said General Lee; "but Annie, I am afraid you are putting too much cant into the child's mouth. Don't, I beseech you, *overdo* the matter of his *religious* education, which you think of such vast importance."

"I shall certainly try not to *overdo* it, sir, though I am not sure that *we* should agree as to the amount required first," said Mrs. Lee with a sweet yet serious smile.

"Why, I would have a child brought up to reverence his Maker, of course; to be obedient and dutiful to his parents; and with the highest standard of truth and integrity in his dealings with the world at large. But to have his memory burdened with texts of Scripture which he doesn't understand, and verses of rhyme which have precious little poetry in them—are, in short, mere vehicles for insipid moralizing or frightful denunciation—is, in my opinion, little calculated to strengthen his mental faculties or fit him for the actual duties of life. I tell you what, Master Tommy would have done you credit in the days of Cromwell; but times are changed much for the better now, and men feel that they were intended for something more practical than whining and canting away their lives."

"I don't think this is exactly the place or time for a discussion of this question, father; but I must say that I think you do not treat the matter with your usual justice."

"I hope I have not said any thing rude, my dear Annie, for certainly, as far as you

and some others are concerned, religion seems fair enough, only you cheat yourselves of much enjoyment in this life by over-strict notions of duty, which seems a great pity. Still, when one is governed by the honest convictions of his own mind, no one can say a word. What I dislike is, this educating a child into hypocrisy — of which, we all know, there's enough without—by allowing him to talk constantly of things he can not possibly understand, evidently with the idea that it makes him quite superior to the rest of the world."

"It is wonderful how much they can understand, sir, and delightful to see with what simple faith they often lay hold of religious truth. Still of course, I agree with you that we can not guard them too much against any thing like hypocrisy and spiritual pride, but I have always thought these not so often discernible in children as in those who are older, humility and docility being the distinguishing traits, we are most apt to attribute to them. With regard to early religious education, we have surely great encouragement in

the promise: 'Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.'"

"Yes, yes; I don't question the propriety of bringing children up *well;* all that I object to is, clouding their young lives with gloomy terrors of an hereafter, they, poor innocent lambs, have no cause to dread, or with thoughts of death before their time. Religion is a very sober thing, not much calculated to make any one *happy* in this world, you must admit, and it seems to me wholly unfitted for the young. Indeed, my dear child, I have been intending to beg you to try to divert our sweet Alice's thoughts from it somewhat. Depend upon it, it does her harm! I wish you would gratify me by making the experiment. Put away her Bible and prayer-book, together with those other religious books she is so fond of reading, and replace them with amusing comedies, or diverting games and young company. I believe in less than a week she would forget her cough, and her cheeks begin to plump

out again, and yours too, perhaps, if you will join her."

"O father! father! how I wish I could tell you the degree of happiness which such a course would deprive my dear child of! She must tell you herself how very sweet she finds the joys of religion, and how little the pleasure she derived from other sources, in the days of health, in her bright and joyous girlhood, can compare with that peace 'which passeth all understanding,' found in the fellowship she has enjoyed, in her sick-room, with her blessed Saviour. You speak of religion as a 'sober, gloomy thing, *at best*, for any one in this world.' Indeed, it is a mistaken idea! Why, without referring to the hopes we cherish of the life which is to come, there is not a day of my life that it does not make me ready to exclaim: 'The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places, yea I have a goodly heritage!'"

As Mrs. Lee ceased speaking, the old gentleman looked up with some surprise at her kindling eye and the glow of deep, earnest, hopeful feeling which flushed her usually

calm, pale face; he murmured something about *religious enthusiasm*, but was evidently touched and softened. Presently he said somewhat abruptly:

"Well, well; I have no business quarrelling with the faith of others, although my own bitter experience has rather injured my capability of believing any thing that is not very plain and direct. Oh!

> 'Hypocrisy, the only evil that walks
> Invisible, except to God alone,'

shows so hideous a face when the vail is once lifted, that it's scarcely a wonder. I should live in dread of a *second* sight of her forever after! But you almost make me believe, while I'm talking with you, that real sincere religion is a freer and a happier thing than I have accustomed myself to regard it."

"And I, on my part, feel the fullest assurance that there is light yet in store for you, sir. Yes, I *know* that your sun is not to set in *darkness*," she replied.

General Lee gave her an earnest, searching look of inquiry as he asked with evident emotion:

"How can you say that you *know* this, my dear?"

"'If ye abide in me and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will and it shall be done unto you!' is my pledge, father. Too many faithful prayers have been offered, to leave me room for a moment's doubt."

The old gentleman brushed a tear from his eye, and quickly assuming a light and cheerful tone, turned to Mr. Ludwell, saying:

"I did not mean to occupy so much of the time you had intended to employ differently. Let us go without further delay, therefore, to the proper business of the evening. I move, in the first place, that I, grandpa, be elected chairman of the committee. All in favor of this motion please to say ay."

"Ay! ay! ay!" was shouted out with great animation.

"Now all not in favor of it will signify the same by saying, 'No!'" said grandpa.

"No!" called out Frank, "*our eldest son*,' a manish boy of fifteen. "I move that the proceeding is irregular, and that grandpa let us name our own chairman."

"Hey-day! that's a pretty republican spirit to manifest towards your elders, young man; however, to encourage you in your ideas of regularity, etc, I withdraw and allow you to have the election over," said grandpa.

Frank then nominated grandpa, himself, and the votes were this time unanimous.

"I move," said Mr. Ludwell, "that little Emmy and Charlie be given into mammy's keeping for the night, they showing evident signs of unfitness for the consideration of the important matter we have at this time before us."

This was also promptly seconded and carried without a dissenting voice. Accordingly mammy soon appeared, accompanied by her adjunct Marion, and the two sleeping children were carried off to the nursery. After various suggestions and much discussion, it was at length agreed that good old Mrs. Banks should be pressed, if possible, into the service. Mrs. Banks was an old and attached friend of the family, who had lived with Mr. Ludwell's father and mother when he was a boy, and had nursed most of his children when

they were babies. The children were all devoted to her, and highly delighted at the prospect of being placed under her motherly care instead of being sent to spend the time with different relations or placed at boarding-schools. There were two objections to this plan which must, however, be obviated; first, Mrs. Banks was growing very old, and could scarcely be expected to consent to leave her quiet, snug little cottage-home in Washington, at her time of life, to take entire charge of a large family of children and servants. The young people looked so disappointed, when this difficulty was represented, that grandpa, whose delight it was to gratify their every wish, said: "Never mind, my children; don't be troubled about *that*. I know how to set a trap for the old woman that will be sure to catch her; leave it to me to manage my own way, and mother Banks will be sure to come."

"How will you do it, grandpa? Do please tell us."

"No, no, not to-night. I've got a little surprise on foot for more than one of you."

The other difficulty was about their *education.* Mr. Ludwell thought of a tutor; but not knowing a suitable person to employ, disliked the thought of intrusting them to a perfect stranger in his absence. Finally, he concluded that the best plan would be to send the elder girls to Frank's schoolmaster, an Irish gentleman named McLeod, who taught in the family of a widow lady, Mrs. Brown, living about two and a half miles from Belmont. "In good weather the walk will do the lassies good, and when it's bad they must ride," he said.

Mrs. Ludwell looked very much disconcerted, however, at this arrangement.

"I don't think it will answer at all, Mr. Ludwell," she said. "I never could allow our girls to attend a mixed school of that kind; for, in the first place, I should be so nervous about their contracting some contagious disease; and then, I know such association can not fail to make them rude and unpolished."

Mr. Ludwell laughed merrily.

"Is there more danger of contag'on for the

girls than the boys, then, my dear Emma? I'll warrant you, Mrs. Banks will take precautions enough about that too. Do you remember, Annie, those two years we spent in Washington in our school-days? How anxious the old lady would become at every rumor of small-pox or scarlet-fever having broken out, and the little camphor-bags we wore round our necks to charm them off?"

"Oh! perfectly; and what implicit faith I placed in mine; but you were always skeptical, much to Mrs. Banks's annoyance. I confess, however, upon the other point, I agree with Emma. It does not seem very desirable to have the children placed under just such influences."

"I'll be bound for you *aristocrats!* Why, I'll ask Mrs. Brown to keep an eye upon *our* children; and, if you think it best, to put them all to themselves on a different side of the room from the rest. I believe there's something in the Bible about saying: 'Stand thou there, for I am holier than thou.' Isn't there?"

"Yes; but I don't think it is applicable in

this case, brother. We are only for guarding the young from temptation; not, I hope and believe, exclusively from any spirit of pride, but simply for prudence's sake."

"This would not be my choice, if I saw any thing *less objectionable* to be done; but, as we have so little time for our preparations, I can not possibly look round for a trusty and responsible tutor—for a few months only I am sure no harm can be done to the children's polish and refinement."

Accordingly, after a little more discussion of the question, this arrangement was decided upon.

"O papa! what a different thing Annie and I will find it, to study our lessons for Mr. McLeod, from saying them to you in your nice library, and having you to talk to us about them afterwards, and make them so interesting," said Clara despondingly.

"Now, Miss, not one word, if you please, in disparagement of our '*Academy*,'" said Frank. "I wish you could just have seen that *tall* young gent from Richmond, who arrived day before yesterday. He had seen in

the papers the advertisement of 'Cedar Grove Classical Academy,' and thought he was coming to some grand institution of learning no doubt. But he does not believe in our little log school-house, with the benches and desks all cut and hacked, and two little dingy windows with dimity curtains, being the place for him to spout his Thucydides and Sophocles. You never saw any thing so blank as his face when he stared round the room. As for Mr. McLeod and the rest of us, he concluded *at once* we could be nothing better than a set of numskulls. In my opinion, however, he never had half as good a teacher in his life as Mr. McLeod; and when he was pretending he *wouldn't* read the passage which was given him in Horace, it was only because he *couldn't*. He actually asked me how Mr. McLeod learned to speak English so well, since he has only been in this country a year? I took the greatest pleasure in putting on a knowing, important look, and asking him if he did not know that all educated Irish people speak English?"

"But, Frank," asked his mother, "does Mr. McLeod permit the boys to tell him they *won't?*"

"No, indeed, ma'am; and this young man is going right back to his uncle. Mrs. Brown was quite imposed on by his pretentious ways, and tried very hard to please him about his accommodations; but when he came into Mr. McLeod's department, *he* soon showed him how much *he* thought of him."

"I'm very glad he is going away, I'm sure. But now, tell me, Frank, which are the nicest little girls there?"

"Oh! there's *one* who will suit Clara's taste, I know, exactly; her name is Josephine Ball. I expect she is just Clara's age, and very pretty, with light curling hair and rosy cheeks, and dresses so nicely, too, in a dark brown merino with a white linen apron, coming up high in the neck, and a ruffle round the throat; but she makes such simple mistakes about her lessons that every body laughs at her. To-day it was a little worse than usual, though. She was saying

her history lesson about the silver mines in South-America, that the Indian discovered as he was going up the mountain, by pulling up a weed and finding silver clinging to the roots. Mr. McLeod was trying to make Miss Josephine give the account of it in her own words; but she stuttered and stammered so that he had to help her out with every word. "Very good, Miss Josey," he said in the kindest tone, to encourage her. "You said that the Indian caught hold of something to keep him from falling. Can't you remember what it was? You know it came up in his hand, and he found silver clinging to the roots. Now, *what was* it?"

"His *nose*, sir!" Josephine drawled out with her face as red as crimson, and looking as simple as I don't know what. Oh! there was such a laugh in the school! Mr. McLeod couldn't help laughing himself, though he tried not, because Josey looked so ashamed, and cried very much about it; but little Jack Brown had no mercy on her, for he would keep slipping up to her after

school, and, putting his finger on his nose, wonder if Miss Josey wouldn't please find a silver-mine at his roots. Poor little Josey was so teased by him that I had to stop him by asking how he spelt butterfly, which he had made *buttifly* one day in his spelling-class. Mr. McLeod made us all laugh too, once, with his Irish brogue. He gave the boys '*obsthreperous*' to spell, instead of *obstreperous*, and was all out of patience because the boys would put in the 'h.' They did it on purpose too, most of them."

"Fie! fie! Frank!" said grandpa, interrupting him and laughing heartily, "have you no conscience about telling tales out of school? I wish some of your school-fellows were here to turn the tables upon you, for I'll be bound you have twisted your Latin sentences out of shape, many and many a time. I should not wonder, indeed, to hear of something as laughable as the little Irish boy's translation of that beautiful passage in Virgil, when, according to Gerald Griffin he made, *Acri gaudet equo,* 'rejoices upon his *bitther* horse.' 'Oh! murther alive!'

says the poor masther—an Irishman too, you see, Frank, 'his *bitther* horse? Erra, what would make a horse be *bitther*, Jim? Sure 'tis not of sour beer he is speaking! Rejoicin' upon a bitther horse! Dear knows what a show he was! What raison he had for it. *Acri equo*, upon his *metthelsome steed!* that's the construction.' Can you beat that, master Frank? I think at last our anecdotes have reconciled Clara to your academy, if we may judge by her merriment. Such immoderate laughter, my daughter, is hardly dignified enough for 'Miss Ludwell,' the deputy head of the family. See! we shall have to depose you, miss, if you do not compose yourself instantly, and try that demure little grandmother Susy; but no! that won't do either, for I have a complaint against her too. She promised at dinner that I should have my cocoa when I waked from my afternoon nap."

"O grandpa! I am so sorry I forgot all about it. Harry and George kept me busy until dark, covering their balls. Is it too late now, sir?"

"Too late? Why, yes, my dear; for once at least the old adage, 'Better late than never, is out of place. Go call Peter to light my pipe, and then, as an especial reward for your excellent memory, I mean to submit to the house a capital motion, which, I am perfectly sure, will not call forth a single dissenting vote from you young commoners, whatever the executive committee may find to say on the subject."

"Now, grandpa," said Susy, shaking her finger reproachfully at him, "what did you say that part about my memory for?" and then, having quickly discharged her errand, she came running back to rejoin the eager young group, who were already quite impatient for the announcement of this great scheme of grandpa's which proved nothing less than that their cousins Thomas and Susan Forrest should be asked to let Alfred, Lizzie, and Fanny come to stay at Belmont, and go with them to school. Grandpa said he thought the youngsters ought to have some more cheerful and congenial society than that of a rheumatic old

woman and an Irish pedagogue, especially as they were not to associate very intimately with their school-fellows.

"What a grand idea that is, grandpa! I'm heartily obliged to you for my part, I'm sure," said Frank.

"Dear papa!" said Clara, with her cheeks glowing and her eyes sparkling. "I know you will not make any objection; you know how we will miss you and dear mamma, and not even Lizzie and Fannie can take your places; but it will help to keep us from being so very lonesome. Annie will like it, too, so much, for she does not know the girls yet so well as we do, and she wants to, very much.

"You little witch!" said the father, patting affectionately her rosy cheeks. "You think you can coax papa into any thing when you put on that pleading face, and speak in those persuasive tones, but grandpa will have, first, to promise to keep you all out of mischief when you put your wild heads together."

"No, no!" said the old gentleman, laugh-

ing heartily. "To tell the truth, I'd scarcely like to venture a peep at Belmont while the cats are away and the mice at play."

"Oh! I trust they will not be very wild and ungovernable," said Mrs. Ludwell anxiously.

"I have no fear on that score," said her husband; "for I rely on their self-respect and sense of honor; they will surely not let us regret having placed our confidence in *these*. The elder ones, I mean, and the little ones Mrs. Banks will keep under due restraint."

"To be sure, to be sure!" said General Lee. "No doubt they will be twice as well behaved and proper, as when you are at home. I intend, however, going *abroad* too —Alice and her mother shall be under my charge, for I think it will be better that the two invalids should not depend upon each other's movements."

In vain Mrs. Lee remonstrated against this arrangement; knowing the old gentleman's abhorrence, hitherto, of a sea-voyage, she tried to convince him that she would be

able to manage every thing very well for her dear child. "You know, dear father, that the power of a mother's love can supply experience, skill and strength," she said. But he would not yield his point, and she rose to leave the room, saying she was entirely discomposed at finding all her arguments unavailing. Mrs. Ludwell stopped her, however, as she was bidding her good-night to ask, which she did with some hesitation of manner, if she would not let the children sing with her that beautiful hymn she had taught them.

"Yes, Aunt, do! here is your place at the old organ, and I want you to tell us if we have not improved some," said Clara.

Mrs. Lee seated herself promptly, and the children gathered round her, while she played a spirited accompaniment and led the little choir in Bishop Ken's beautiful evening hymn:

"Glory to thee, my God, this night
For all the blessings of the light."

Sweet voices and fine musical powers were

inherited gifts in the united families of the Lees and Ludwells, and as the rich notes rose and fell, General Lee laid aside the pamphlet he had at first taken up, and keeping time with his foot, listened with undisguised delight; while Mr. Ludwell, carried back to those by-gone years, when in the same room, the same old organ had resounded beneath his honored father's touch and his own voice had been united with those of his mother and two gentle and beautiful sisters, in their Sunday-evening hymns, was much moved; and, after looking very tenderly for a few moments at Mrs. Lee, the only surviving one of those beings around whom his earliest affections had been so closely entwined, yielded at length to the inspiration of the moment and joined in the animated chorus:

"Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
Praise him, all creatures here below;
Praise him, above, ye angelic host,
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost."

CHAPTER III.

"O ANNIE! isn't this a nice '*trap*' that grandpa has set to catch Mrs. Banks in? And won't we have a delightful time travelling with him to the city? He is the very kindest, dearest grandfather in the world," said Clara, on the second morning after the evening described in the last chapter, as her cousin and herself left the breakfast-table together, looking both pleased and excited.

"Indeed it is, Clara, a *very nice trap;* but suppose after all it don't catch Mrs. Banks. Suppose she doesn't mind our begging as much as grandpa expects she will? Any how, it is just like him to plan this little trip for us, and I know we will enjoy ourselves very much. Yes, indeed, dear grandpa knows how to make us happy. I do love him so much!"

"You've been to Washington as often as I have, I expect, Annie, for papa never

hardly lets us go away from home; he says he wants us to stay here and have our young friends to come and see *us*, so we may love it better than any other place and be happy among ourselves."

"I wonder if every body doesn't love their home the very best, and wouldn't be glad to stay there always, except just sometimes for a little while to see what other people are doing? But I expect uncle must know some people who don't, or he wouldn't be so very particular," answered Annie.

"Yes, papa says that children who are allowed to go about much after strangers sometimes get tired of their best friends, and don't take as much pains to make them happy as they do other people. I don't know how they can feel so though, for I never saw any one I *could* love as much as I do my relations if I were to try. Next to Aunt Annie and you all, I love our cousin Forrests, and I know you will like them *ever so much*, too, when you know them well."

"I expect I will, but I never saw them except those two days we spent in Washing-

ton on our way home after we came to see you that time, when, you know, my dear father and little Lucy were alive."

"Oh! I remember that time so well, and how much I admired Alice for being such a little lady as she seemed to me when she used to rock Lucy to sleep and sing to her, 'By a baby buntin'! Daddy's gone a hunt-in', to get a rabbit's skin to wrap the baby buntin' in.' I thought it so very pretty, that I was very anxious to imitate her with our little Alice, as she was the baby then, but somehow I couldn't make Alice love me as Lucy did her sister Alice. At last what do think happened one day? I'll tell you if you'll promise not to tell any body else. O dear! I can't help laughing, though I feel ashamed too, when I think of it! Mamma had company staying here, Marion was sick, and mammy was wanted for something down-stairs while the family were at dinner. So she told me, if I chose, I might stay in the nursery and have the baby all to myself to take care of and amuse her. As I was going out of the room 'Cousin Jane Gray said:

'Now, Clara, let's see what a good little nurse you'll make, and when you get your little child to sleep, come back to us.' This made me in a great hurry to send poor little Alice off to the land of Nod; but she was teething and cross, and kept on fretting until I got out of patience, because I thought I never would get back to the parlor before the company were gone, and besides, I was afraid they would think I wasn't a good nurse. At last, in despair, I took her and laid her in the deep lower drawer of the bureau, and shut it up tight, thinking she'd soon get tired of crying in there and go to sleep. I was going down-stairs after this, very much pleased with my clever trick, when Alice Lee came up to help me to nurse the baby, she said; but not seeing the child, only hearing its smothered cries, she looked very much frightened, and asked me where she was. I smiled and pointed to the drawer. Alice ran to open it and took Allie out, telling me I might have *killed* my little baby-sister. You may depend upon it I was frightened *then*, and begged her not to

tell mamma. Alice looked very grave and said:

"'No, Clara, I will not if you don't wish it, and will promise *never* to do any thing of the kind again; but if I were you I would go right to Aunt Emmy and tell her all about it myself. Nothing would make my mother so sorry as to find us hiding things from her, and I expect Aunt Emmy feels so too.' So then I went to mamma and told her what I had done."

"And what *did* Aunt Emmy say?" asked Annie, who had listened with breathless interest to the story.

"Oh! she *said* very little, but looked *so* shocked! She never told any one, even papa about it, and can't bear to think, even to this day, of what might have happened—she says it makes her nervous and almost sick. It was a long, long time I can tell you, before she ever let any of us play in a room by ourselves with the little children."

"You were so very small, Clara, that I can not understand how you managed at all."

"Well, you see, mammy had put little

Allie on a sheep-skin mat to play with her shells, right close to the bureau, and I thought if your Alice, who was two years older than me, could carry Lucy about in her arms, I might certainly just move Allie that far. But, please, Annie, don't forget and tell any body of me. Frank would never be done teasing me about being in such a hurry to be a woman, if he was to know it."

"Come, girls, are you most ready? The roads are not very fine at this season, so we've no time to lose," called their grandfather's voice from below-stairs.

"Yes, sir, we'll hurry on with our bonnets in a few minutes," answered Clara.

"Very well; tell mammy to be quick with the little ones too—they are all to go, down to lady-bird Phebe."

At this news Clara gave Annie rather a disconcerted look, and said with a thoughtful, troubled air:

"I'm very sorry so many are going. I'm afraid they'll be very much in the way."

"Oh! no, Clara, they won't," said Annie; "we can sit up close together, and they'll enjoy it so much, we won't mind crowding for *them*."

"I don't mind the *crowding* the least bit in the world; but I don't like going to the city in such a troop. I'm afraid it will make the people laugh to see such a *quantity* of children, and as we are strangers, they won't know that we are genteel people either. The carriage will look like a show-nursery, or like Cousin Jeff's little cage full of Java sparrows," replied Clara.

Her grandfather had approached by this time sufficiently near to hear this remark without being perceived by the two girls, until he said, with some haughtiness in his tones:

"I should really think that Miss Ludwell might sufficiently respect herself and her family to be unaffected by any remarks from passing strangers. Let them laugh! What have you to do with their laugh? Is it not enough that you are born in a position which makes you independent of the frowns or

smiles of society. Leave those to whom *they* can be of any consequence to be governed by such puerile reasoning. I insist upon the show-nursery and the cage of Java sparrows."

It was not long now before the large family coach was waiting for them. Tom, the driver, was mounted on the box, dressed in his trimmest suit and laden with commissions from his fellow-servants, which made him feel exceedingly important as he drew the large bearskin over his limbs, and nodded knowingly in answer to the last demand made upon his time in the city. The pampered grays were arching their beautiful necks, and snorting impatiently, while General Lee's groom was holding the bridles of his own and his master's horse, and caressing the creatures to keep them quiet, when the old gentleman appeared at the head of his little troop. First came Clara, in a pelisse of rich dark blue silk and a black velvet bonnet, imitating as closely as possible a grown lady's. She had little occasion for these her best things, in the country in winter, and accordingly this unexpected opportunity of dis-

playing them in the city was hailed with peculiar pleasure.

"If mamma would only have lent me her black lace vail, I should have looked so nicely, and I think she might, as I am *thirteen* now, and tall of my age, too, *every body* says," she thought to herself as she walked on with a dignified step and holding her head very high; but she felt quite contented again as she glanced at Annie's mouse-colored merino, trimmed with velvet, and her modest little velvet bonnet with a simple child-like cap, which was extremely becoming to her full fresh young face. Little Tommy, in his rich plaid winter clothes, and dark blue velvet cap over his long light auburn ringlets, looked "like a picture," the children said, as he clung close to Annie's side. Then came the two boys, Harry and George—one eleven and the other nine years of age, in suits of dark green cloth. And the little sisters, Susy and Alice, with only one year between them, and twins in size, dressed in pelisses of fine scarlet cloth, trimmed with a rich bordering of dark blue and gold, with arms

twined round each others' waists, whispered mysteriously, and bobbed their little chinchilla fur hats together like "two little ponies in harness," as Frank used to call them. Last of all came the *real twins*, Emma and Charlie. It was so established a rule in the nursery that they were to dress alike, that the children often puzzled themselves about what should be done when Charlie got to be a big boy; but as they were only six at present, both appeared in blue with swan's-down borders. Mammy, a portly old mulatto woman, followed the children in her dress frock of invisible green stuff, white apron, large warm shawl, and a spotless turban under her comfortable hood. On one arm she carried a very large covered basket, containing a suit of clothes apiece for the whole party. On the other, a smaller one of biscuits and cakes for luncheon. Mammy felt the responsibility of her charge, notwithstanding "grandpa's" presence, and was very uneasy lest the children should do something beneath the family dignity. She had coaxed and petted Charlie

into promising to be good and obedient, but seemed still very unbelieving in those promises; the rest she entertained with long legends of their family grandeur, and how beautiful their "ma" always behaved herself when she was young, deducing the moral of how much "is 'spected from *gentlemun's* children when they goes abroad." The carriage being wide and roomy, by dint of close packing and squeezing, and sitting some upon the others' laps, the children all found places, the large basket being mounted with Tom on the box, and the smaller one sharing mammy's lap with Emma. The footman was dispensed with, General Lee's attendant, Peter, being found sufficient for all. As they were about to start, the old gentleman rode up to the carriage-window and looked in with an air of satisfaction; then tapping Clara on the shoulder, said with a mischievous laugh: "It's a fine *brood*, my dear—does credit to the mother hen," glancing at mammy. After which he touched his steed with his spur, which he still wore, and was soon at some distance in advance of them, while Peter held

in his horse and rode between the two parties. For the first half-hour excitement subdued all the children, and they rode peacefully on. Clara and Annie unfolding to the rest all their plans, how they were sent expressly to ask Mrs. Banks to come and stay with them and Mr. and Mrs. Forrest to let their cousins come.

"Mrs. Banks never *nursed* me when I was a baby, and I an't going to mind her," said Charlie.

"Oh! but you *must*, Charlie, or mother and father will be angry. If she didn't nurse you, it's only because she was very sick herself and couldn't, but she nursed papa even, and all of us down to you and Emma," said Susy.

"Don't care; I am going to *bite* her!" answered Charlie, at the same time pulling tufts out of Emma's swan's-down trimming, and blowing them off out of the window, pleasing himself with an imaginary flock of white geese, until Emma discovered his depredations, and made loud complaints to mammy,

showing at the same time the bared spots with great indignation.

"Now, Mas' Charles!" said mammy with unusual mildness and patience, "don't trouble yer sister any more, *please*, that's a good boy; jes' see how ugly you made her cloak look aready."

But Charlie didn't feel inclined to oblige her ladyship; so with a sly mischievous look in his face he grabbed out a larger handful and sent it flying through the air with a great *puff;* Emma cried at this outrage, and mammy shook him, saying:

"Oh! you is *certainly* the greatest *torment* ever any body seed. Mas' Charles! ef you can't behave like a gentleman's son, I'll make Tom put you out in them woods for the runaways to catch."

"Don't, mammy," said Annie. "Mother says its such a bad plan to frighten children. Come, Charlie, sit over here by sister Clara and me, and be a good boy and I'll tell you and Tommy a story."

Charlie changed places with George, and there was peace again while Annie told him

about a poor little Indian boy who was found in the woods, not far from her father's plantation in the South—how Cousin Alice used to teach him to read and be good, and how fast he learned, and was a very good, obedient little boy; but he died after a while and went to heaven. But every body was sorry to lose him, because he was kind and obliging, and loved every body.

"Well! I don't care if he did. I'm not going to die, and go to heaven. I'm going to grow up to be a man, and fight the Indians with a gun," said Charlie; and soon after this, little Tommy who had been wincing and moving about on Annie's lap, whispered very low in her ear, while the tears stood in his large blue eyes:

"Sister, he hurts me so bad, tant he stop pincing me?" The color rose in Annie's cheek, and her eye flashed indignantly as she looked down and saw several large purple spots on her dear little brother's white arm and shoulder.

"You naughty, naughty boy!" she said,

turning to Charlie and pushing him impatiently off the seat; "how could you do so?"

"Charlie!" said Clara, "I shall get Tom to ask grandpa to come here with his riding-whip and make you behave, and I shall ask mamma not to let you come next time. You ought to be ashamed to treat your little cousin so."

Charlie looked defiantly at her, and without making any answer raised his hand and struck Tommy a hard blow in the face. The little fellow struggled bravely for some moments, but it was in vain; the tears would flow, and he hid his head in Annie's bosom and sobbed. The color left Annie's cheek as quickly as it had come. She was too angry to speak at first, but at length regaining somewhat her composure, she said:

"Clara, I *must* speak to grandpa about this, for you see Charlie will not behave, and I can not let *Tommy* be hurt."

The suddenness of Charlie's attack had taken every one by surprise, and at first they all seemed stunned; but now there was a general outcry, and Tom was ordered to

stop the carriage and call Peter, who came riding back to see what the matter was. Upon being informed, he looked at Charlie fiercely, and began talking about his large knife, and threatening to cut off the young gentleman's head; but Annie stopped him, saying quietly:

"Just tell grandpa, if you please, Peter, that Charlie is very naughty, and we can not ride with him in the carriage until he is made to behave."

"What!" said General Lee, when he had investigated the matter. "What! has the little *preacher* been in a fight? Fie! for shame, you young belligerents! I must separate you, and bind you over to keep the peace, must I?"

"Grandpa, it was all Charlie's fault, *indeed* it was. Tommy did not do one thing to him—he didn't even *touch* him," exclaimed a great many little voices at once. "You ought just to know how bad Charlie is, *sometimes*," they added.

"Well, but I'm afraid master Tommy is

a cry-baby. He'd better have fought it out like a man, and have done with it."

"Mamma says I *never* must fight, sir. God won't tate me up to heaven if I do. I twied to teep fwom twying, but Charlie hurt me so I tould not help it. I'm afwaid something will happen to him if he don't tate tare," said Tommy, holding up his head and wiping away the tears from his little swollen face.

"Why, you benevolent little rascal, was it *that* made you cry? Here Peter, take this young scapegrace and put him up before you on the saddle—see that you hold him tight, and if that impertinent 'something' makes another grab for him let me know. Don't be uneasy, master Tommy, he shan't get him if hard blows will prevent," said his grandfather with mock seriousness.

There was an expression of relief and pleasure, as Charlie was withdrawn from the carriage. He smiled, also, and looked quite pleased at the prospect of charge. Mounted up before Peter, he took possession of his whip and amused himself tick-

ling the horse's ears, or cutting at the leafless branches as they passed. Every now and then, too, he attempted by some question or remark, to attract his grandfather's attention: but the old gentleman, after eyeing him keenly for a few minutes, left him entirely unnoticed, preserving an unbroken silence and an imperturbable countenance, for he was in fact far more displeased at his conduct than he had thought fit to manifest publicly, and was meditating such an act of discipline as Charlie little dreamt of.

The equestrians being some miles in advance of the carriage, reached the half-way house—a small country inn at which they were to dine, about an hour before the rest of the party. The host of the "Franklin Hotel" was an honest Pennsylvanian democrat who held in high regard the memory of the Patriarch, whose portrait in strong colors waved backward and forward in front of his door. An old copy of "Poor Richard's Almanac," which had been his father's before him, and had received more than one new brown cover, still adorned the

three-cornered shelf, in his best parlor, made to hold his large, old, leather-backed Bible and hymn book. And he was never weary of quoting on all occasions its pithy sayings.

When Mr. Gunnel saw from the window, General Lee and his body-servant approaching, he instantly began to make preparations for his reception, calling first in a stentorian voice to Judy, the house-maid, to have a roaring fire, to air the chamber above; and to Jack, the ostler, to be ready to "tend to the *Gineral's* horses." He then stationed himself in waiting on the long portico, holding in his hand the rough cob-pipe, just taken from his lips; and tucked under his arm, his unfinished newspaper. With a broad grin on his red-whiskered face, he made at length his profoundly respectful salutations to his guest, and took Charlie down from the horse, patting him heartily as he did so, and saying: "Fine little boy, Gineral—one of Mrs. Ludwell's, I calculate."

"Yes!" said General Lee, laconically. Then having given directions for dinner to be prepared for his party, he ordered Peter

to carry up-stairs a tub of water and a stout bunch of rods—the last of which directions made his little companion start and look up in his face with a wondering expression.

Peter, as he started off with alacrity to execute his master's orders, gave the child a significant and most unsympathizing wink. The General being naturally of a gentle and kind disposition, loving to indulge those around him, and often, at the expense of his own personal comfort, had scarcely ever in his life been known to inflict corporal punishment, but he had his theory on this as well as other subjects, and when he once felt called upon to show the Spartan side of his character, went through the business systematically and thoroughly—the tub of water being the indispensable accompaniment to the bunch of rods.

In the present instance he had been roused to indignation by the wanton cruelty of Charlie's attack upon his gentle and unoffending little *fatherless* cousin — a fault which to his chivalrous and generous nature, seemed too shocking to pass unno-

ticed, and he had accordingly resolved to give him a lesson not soon to be forgotten. The *cowardly* meanness of his conduct was most eloquently enlarged upon to the child, and then a sound flogging was administered, with the utmost coolness and precision, after which he was delivered up to Peter to be soused in cool water until his passion had subsided, and good humor was restored. The success of this mode of operation was fully proved, by the radiant smiles and glowing cheeks with which Charlie, clinging fondly to his grandfather's coat-tails, presented himself at the tavern-door to meet the carriage, when it drove up half an hour afterwards.

Whilst the horses were resting and dinder was preparing, he pointed out to Tommy and Emma the picture of Franklin on the swinging sign, and other wonders which he had discovered about the place before their arrival. But he was particularly assiduous in his attentions to *Tommy*, and even shared with him the handful of chestnuts, which the good-natured Judy had given

him in pity for his whipping. The children wondered at this marvellous change in his conduct, but it was not long before the secret of it crept out, being communicated, with humorous circumstantiality, by Peter to George and Harry, while they were superintending Tom rubbing down the horses; and from them it was passed round in confidential whispers to the rest, who were not less surprised than Charlie himself, at this new phase of grandpa's character.

When the journey was resumed, Charlie was very willing to take a seat in the carriage, and with his head resting on mammy's shoulder, took a long nap. Indeed the whole party were nodding their heads long before they reached Mr. Forrest's, it being quite dark when they drove up to his door. Grandpa with his man, went immediately to the hotel, promising to come round to breakfast the next morning

The little country cousins received a clamorous welcome from their city relatives, and scarcely had they taken breath before the object of their visit was stated and the

promise obtained that they would beg their father and mother to send them to Belmont to school, and before bed-time came they had actually gained "Cousin Thomas and Susan's" consent—as much to the delight of the young Forrests, as of the little Lees and Ludwells. The three youngest children were very glad to take an early supper and retire to their snug little beds, but the others were too excited and happy to feel sleepy. Many a merry game was played first, and many a long story told, and childish secret communicated; but at last the time came for pairing off, and having each chosen a congenial friend, they all went off up-stairs to enjoy each other's society, to the last waking moment.

Fannie, Lizzie, and Clara, having tried in vain to induce Annie to let Tommy share the apartment prepared for the *little* ones, under mammy's guardianship, were at length obliged to be contented with having him also in their room, even at the risk of his overhearing and betraying their most confidential communications.

CHAPTER IV.

BEFORE any of her young room-mates were awake next morning, Annie had risen, noiselessly dressed herself, and said her prayers; then she went to her little brother and kissing his little pouting lips, waked him that they might have a quiet time together; when he had said his morning hymn and prayer to her, she read a chapter in the Bible aloud, just as her mother was in the habit of doing every day with her children. She selected the healing of the nobleman's son, and Tommy's eyes were fastened earnestly upon her, as if he was drinking in every word. When she had finished and laid the book down, she still held him thoughtfully on her lap.

"Sister," said the child, "*Mustn't* that little boy's father have felt glad when he came back and found his son well again?"

"Yes, indeed, Tommy! for he *begged* Jesus to come and cure him. Didn't he?"

"If I was to see him, O my! I would *bed* him so hard to tome and ture my sister Allie, and I'd ast him to do it very *tuick*, too, so that mother won't have to do away and tate her from you and me, sister Annie."

"But, dear little brother, don't you remember that mother says he hears us when we pray just as much as if we were looking at him?"

"Yes, I wemember, but I teep fordetting it," said the little fellow looking thoughtful and serious. "Well, I'll ast him all over adain, *please*, *please* to tome now this minute." So he knelt once more at his sister's knee, and putting his hands over his eyes which he closed tightly, in his own lisping, childish language, "poured out his heart before the Lord," entreating the same good Saviour who had so kindly healed the little sick boy of whom he had just been reading, to come quickly and cure his dear sister Allie, and not to bring such a sad trouble upon Annie and himself as to send their mother and sister far

away from them over the great wide sea. Little Tommy, in thus looking with simple, fervent trust to the great Physician, the Healer of soul and body, was early practising the lessons learned from his pious mother's example as well as precept; and as again and again he had heard her annex to her supplication for some greatly desired blessing the clause, "Thy will, not mine be done," he now closed with these words his own petition, although of course he had but a child's imperfect comprehension of their meaning.

Oh! that all those who govern and teach might ever thus lead the little ones to the only true Source of consolation in the hours of suffering and sorrow.

When he had finished his little prayer he rose, and with a happy, confident look, threw his arms round Annie's neck, and kissing her several times, said: "Now, darling sister, we'll be dlad too, won't we?"

By this time his cousins were all awake, and Fannie Forrest springing up, caught him in her arms, and kissing him, said:

"O Tommy! you are too sweet — and the funniest child I ever saw."

Tommy drew back and opened his eyes with a look of surprise, as if wondering what was *sweet* and *funny* in what he had just been doing. Mammy now appeared at the door with Charlie and Emmy by the hand, whose toilet she had made with scrupulous care, and had intended offering her services to "Mas Tommy," if Annie had not anticipated her; but nothing remained for her now except to propose his going down with his little cousins to the dining-room, to play until breakfast-time. Annie quickly decided to go too, as she was determined to keep a watchful eye on her little pet when "Mas Charles" was at hand. Grandpa, true to his word, joined them at breakfast, and happy and bright was each little face as he planned for them the proceedings of the day. Scarcely could steady, deliberate old Mammy hurry herself enough in getting them ready, after they left the table. There seemed so much to be done and so much to be seen, that they were sure the day would not be long enough

for all, unless they began very early. At last, however, they were off. Grandpa holding Charlie and Tommy by the hand, headed the phalanx, and Mammy with her pet Emmy, brought up the rear. Now, young readers, you must remember that sight-seeing in the great capital, was not, fifty or sixty years ago, exactly what it is to-day. Still there was a great deal there to astonish and interest a set of little country children who had scarcely ever before been so far from home. And the shops which stood at wide intervals from each other, displayed in their windows many coveted toys and bons bons for the palms which were burning to spend the contents of their little purses. Fannie and Lizzie, however, more experienced shoppers, laughed at their eagerness, and restrained the rest from many an injudicious bargain. As for grandpa, he never seemed to get tired of indulging their whims; indeed, the odder they were, the more amused he appeared to be, and would dodge in and out of the stores, with the greatest patience and good humor. At last, as

they were passing an apothecary's store at the corner of a street, Susy came running up to him, and touching his elbow, begged him to let her go in and buy "one of those great large red and blue things in the window."

"What in the world will you do with it, child?" he asked, laughing heartily, "and what do you take it for?"

"I don't know what it is, grandpa, and that's just what I want it for. Mammy says they look witchified, and I want one to play with, so much."

"Count your money first, then, my lady, and let's see how the funds will hold out for such a speculation."

Susy took out a very small purse of red and green silk, which her sister Clara had knit for her, and exhibited with great satisfaction five little silver coins; not doubting that grandpa would think that sum sufficient for any purchase.

"Let me see, five four-pences!" said he counting them very demurely. "Well, now let's ask Mr. Shopkeeper his price," and to Lizzie and Fannie's unspeakable astonish-

ment in he walked, making a signal for his troop to follow. While they were waiting for the store-keeper to come in, the two girls could not forbear stepping up and saying:

"Why, Uncle! are you really going to offer to buy one of those bottles? They are not for sale, sir, and the man will laugh at us if you do."

"Nevertheless, cousins, I shall buy it, *if I can;* if not, the man may laugh, and my poor little Susy will be disappointed, which is of much more consequence," he answered with a quiet smile.

Dr. Elliott now entered, and bowed and smiled at the crowd of young customers, while he secretly wondered what they could want in his store, not usually so popular with young people. Grandpa motioned little Susy forwards; while the elder girls retreated to the other end of the store, and turned their backs, to avoid seeming to have any concern in the transaction. Susy blushed deeply, and spoke so diffidently that it was some time before she made Dr. Elliott understand what she wanted; and, when she had

at length succeeded, he laughed and looked at General Lee, to see if a grave answer was expected. Grandpa then took the matter in hand, and, after some laughing remarks between himself and the store-keeper, the purchase was presently made, and Susy became the happy possessor of a large glass bottle of colored water. The next difficulty was, how it should be carried. It was hard to induce Susy to relinquish her treasure; yet, there was scarcely a doubt of its being broken, if she attempted to carry it herself. At length mammy succeeded in persuading her to give it to her, promising to be very careful with it; she fully shared Susy's admiration and delight, and as they walked on together, would hold it up to see the sun shining through the great orange-colored stopper, and the large, bright blue, globe-shaped bottle. After spending nearly all the morning in going from place to place, grandpa and his young charge returned home to rest and prepare for dinner.

Mr. and Mrs. Forrest were very much amused at Susy's fancy for her bottle, which

with great difficulty she lugged into the parlor for exhibition, amongst the lot of toys which were displayed as the result of that morning's shopping.

It was nearly five o'clock before dinner was over; then grandpa laid down for an evening nap, and Susy combed out his long white cue, which hung in a silvery plat down his neck, and talked him to sleep, with her plans of future fun and frolic, when the grown people should all be gone from Belmont, except Mrs. Banks. When convinced that she was no longer heard, she left him to enjoy his repose, and joined her young companions in their games of blind-man's buff, last tag, etc., and this evening passed away, as merrily as their first in Washington.

Next morning, Thomas had the carriage ready at the door, quite soon after breakfast; and under mammy's care they drove to see Mrs. Banks. Grandpa had business to keep him from going with them; and Lizzie and Fannie staid to take a music-lesson.

"What a tiny little house!" exclaimed George, as the carriage stopped at her door.

"Yes; I don't see how any body could turn round in it," said Clara; "but it must be very sweet in the summer, when those vines are green and blooming; see how that sweet-briar covers nearly one side of the house, just leaving room for that cunning little window to peep out. I'm glad Mrs. Banks lives there!"

Thomas gave a loud, important rap on the low green door; and almost instantly was answered by a tidy, light-haired, freckle-faced little girl of about nine or ten years old, who stared very hard at the stylish carriage, full of "*strange children*," as she waited to usher them into the house. The front-door opened directly into Mrs. Banks's sitting-room; which you reached, by first descending two steps. The children gazed round upon the picture of order, comfort, and neatness, which presented itself, without allowing the minutest article to escape their observation. The floor was covered with a grave-colored Scotch carpet, and a bright, warm fire glowed in the small, well-blacked Franklin stove, with its shining brass knobs.

There was a lounge on one side of the room, with a neat chintz cover; on another, a semi-circular table of mahogany, darkened by use and time, bordered with narrow slips of satin-wood; there was a tea-chest on this, and a large Bible, covered neatly with brown paper, besides several books of devotion. Behind the door stood a tall, narrow press, containing the household stock of china and glass, the two upper shelves being reserved for the books of a more secular character. An alabaster urn, a pair of plain old silver candlesticks, and some boxes of shells and sea-weed, adorned the mantle-piece, while a good many highly-colored Scripture prints were hung on the walls. There was the Madonna and Child; Peter, with a large, open-mouthed cock, apparently in the act of crowing, beside him; and one or two more. While, placid and still as any picture, sat good old Mrs. Banks herself in the chimney-corner, dressed in her neat, black stuff gown, white checked muslin apron, handkerchief of sheer muslin crossed over her full bust; and on her head a

spotless cap, broad finely-plaited frills, and a band of black ribbon round the front. A lock of smooth gray hair peeped out on each temple, and her mild yet intelligent blue eyes, beamed lovingly on all around her. She was knitting, when the children enntered; with her favorite tortoise-shell cat purring at her feet, and a saucepan simmering on the fire. Eliza, the little girl who had opened the door for them, had been spelling her lesson; her book was lying still open on the cricket, where she had been seated, and near this, on the floor, her work-basket filled with calico quilt-pieces. For a moment or two, Mrs. Banks looked up with amazement, at the crowd of unexpected little visitors: but her face was soon lightened up with a glad, bright smile as she held up her hand, exclaiming:

"Bless me! is it possible these are me children from Belmont come to see me?"

Then one after the other was folded in a warm motherly embrace.

"These two are me dear Miss Hanny's,

I suppose. Poor little dears!" she said, looking tenderly at the fatherless little Tommy and Annie.

She embraced and kissed Tommy, as she did the rest, and was about, more respectfully to offer her hand to his sister; but Annie stepped quickly forward, and throwing her arms round the old lady's neck said:

"Dear Mrs. Banks, mother has taught us to love you for her sake, and I must have my kiss, too."

"Bless you, my child! God bless you!" answered she, smiling through her tears and looking inexpressibly gratified. After this, followed the introduction of the twins, whom Mrs. Banks had never seen before; and Alice and Susy she said, had grown quite beyond her recollection; Alice being only two months old when she was last at Belmont.

"Well, to be sure! and how me buys have grown too! and George is amost as tall as Harry! Little Susy, I suppose, can him a henkerchief for me by this time,"

she said, turning each one of them round to the light, and putting on her spectacles for a thorough scrutiny.

"Miss Clara, I think you look a little pale, me dear, and seem to have a cold, too. Come close to the fire, and put your feet on the fender to warm. Now, tell me all about ma and pa, and all the dear people at Belmont. I've longed to look upon me dear Miss Anny's face, ever since I heard that she had come again to this part of the world. She has seen sorrow, I know, dear Miss Anny; but it's long since her trust was placed upon Him who has promised to take care of the widow and the orphan."

When many questions relating to the family, had been asked and answered, Mammy undertook to explain the object of their visit; and the children clamorously urged her to consent to their parents' request. Smiling at their earnestness, and looking thoughtful, Mrs. Banks promised, "to see about it." "But you must say you *will* before we go away from here," said Alice softly.

"Dear children, I never expected to leave here again, till I'm carried to my narrow house, and I'll tell you how it is with me. You see, I'm growing very old now, and am not at all like I used to be when your papa was a buy, or even when you were babies. What can an old woman, full of aches and pains, do for you, and what would you do with me if I should get sick?"

"I'm sure you won't be sick at Belmont, Mrs. Banks; and if you should be, we'll send for the doctor, and mammy will nurse you," said Alice.

"Thank you, little Alice, but what would become of me little children then?"

"Oh! we could all be very good and mind mammy for just two or three days."

"Well, but, Alice, I've got other reasons yet. Here is me house, which I would hev to leave, with no body to take care of it. What would poor pussy here do without her mistress, and that little girl Eliza, that just went out of the room — she hes no father nor mother — who shall I leave her

with? And then, there's a poor little buy named Johnny, who hes a very sore foot, which he comes every day to have dressed with me salves; and a great many sick people come for me physic, which does them more good, *a great deal*, than the doctor's. When me neighbors meet with any accident, they always come right to me for me ointments; now if it was only the summer time, I'd show you my little herb garden, and the rose bushes, where I get roses for me rose-water."

"Is Eliza's father and mother *both* dead, and Johnny's too?" Alice asked, seemingly so much interested in their history that she could not at present give any thought to pussy, or the house and garden.

"I do not know, me child, whether Eliza's parents are dead or not, for I never knew even who they were. Johnny's mother's living; but she's a poor, sickly creature. His foot has been very bad; but is getting better now, and I hope, by God's blessing, to make him well

enough to be of some use to her one of these days."

"And where did Eliza come from?" inquired Susy.

"I found her one morning, Susy, when she was a little baby, in a basket, at me door."

"How did she get there, I wonder? did her mother lose her? I expect she must'a," chimed in little Emmy, who had observed a shy silence up to this time.

"Some bad mothers, my dear, do not love their poor little children, or wish to be troubled with the care of them; so they take them in the night, and leave them at somebody else's door."

"But suppose something was to come by and hurt the poor little things! Was the weather cold when they left Eliza?" asked Susy.

"Yes, much colder than it now is, and she, poor child, looked pinched and blue enough, and had taken a bad cold too, but I cured her up, and now she's very strong."

"Mrs. Banks, haven't you ever had any children of your own?" asked George abruptly.

"Yes, Georgie, and I've two now in heaven: one of them was just about your age, when he was taken there. It hes been a long time since I saw him with these bodily eyes, but almost every day, when I'm sitting here alone, he comes to me, whistling or singing, and sits himself down in his own little chair, where Emmy is now, and when we meet in our *Father's house*, it will seem but yesterday since we parted."

"Do you live here all by yourself, Mrs. Banks?" asked Susy.

"Oh! no, me child, I trust not, for I ask the blessed Saviour to come and dwell under me roof with me; and, you know, he hes *promised* to come when we ask him; so I trust he is always here. Then there's little Eliza; and sometimes our Heavenly Father sends some of his poor people to me, who perhaps, like the Lord Jesus, hev not where to lay their heads. So I'm very

glad to give them a place in me house, and part of me food, as well as some of the good words out of this big Bible. I sometimes hev a good many visitors, too, on Saturdays and holidays, the young ladies and gentlemen I hev nursed, or known when they were babies; my children, you know, I call them, and I hev a big family, hevn't I? So you see, my dears, I'm not all alone in the world."

"Will any children come to see you to-day?"

"No, I think not; but shall I tell you how I entertain them when they do come?"

"Oh! yes, indeed, ma'am, please do!" said George.

"Eliza has gone for some of me beer, which you must taste, then, for I always give *that* to my visitors."

Eliza now entered, bringing in one hand a small stone jug, and in the other a waiter of cups and tumblers, to which was added by Mrs. Banks some of her little cakes, shaped like dogs, horses, men, etc. Then the foam-

ing beer was pressed upon the company most hospitably, while its wholesome properties were dwelt upon at large; neither mammy nor Tom the driver were neglected in the entertainment. The older girls looked amused, the little ones and mammy pleased. Tom wiped his wide mouth quizzically and made a wry face, before his low bow.

Besides this fondness for dosing her guests, Mrs. Banks had a certain peculiarity in her mode of speech, calculated to amuse them quite as much. The letter *h* she invariably prefixed to words to which it did not belong, and dropped it again, where it had a perfectly lawful right to appear; several other letters also she misplaced or mispronounced, according to the custom of the lower classes in England. But the good old lady had made the very best use of every opportunity for improving herself, and storing her mind with useful knowledge and pious sentiments, so that her conversation was always both instructive and interesting to the young in spite of this defect. We have therefore thought it worth while for the convenience

of the reader, to translate it into more pronounceable English.

While some of the children were amusing themselves with the specimens of shells and sea-weed, and Charlie was playing with pussy, Tommy pointed to one of the Bible-pictures on the wall, and asked Mrs. Banks what it was.

"That's *poor* Peter, my children," said the old lady. "And there you see, is the cock that crowed when Peter had three times denied his Master. Do you remember that? *Poor* Peter! but I don't expect, master Tommy, that he wore a bright yellow cloak exactly like this one."

"I know what *this* one is, Emmy," said Tommy, turning from Peter, when he had looked long enough to satisfy himself about the yellow cloak. "This is our blessed Saviour, and the little children when Jesus said: 'Suffer little children to tome unto me, and forbid them not.' Don't you love the tind Jesus, Emmy?"

"Yes; but I wish I could see him," replied Emmy.

While the little ones prattled over the pictures, Clara and Annie were no less interested in Mrs. Banks's small collection of books, which she prized so highly. "That's 'Hervey's Meditations,' Miss Annie, a very good book indeed, though it's too sad, I believe for some people. Many a time, when I was a young girl, I walked through the same old churchyard, reading that book. Ah! it's a very solemn place for meditation there, among so many dead whose poor bodies hev been resting there under the ground so many long years; but who shell all arise and stand with us before God, when the last trumpet sounds. Yes; and I once heard Mr. Wesley, who wrote that book of sermons in Miss Clara's hand, preach about the last trumpet sounding to the poor colliers in Kingswood. I was a giddy young creature until that time, and was on a visit to me aunt in Bristol. There was a riot among these poor colliers, because times were very hard—grain was scarce and high, and their wages very low; so it was hard for them to get their daily bread.

Mr. Wesley had been preaching to them, and some had been converted through his means. It grieved him, therefore, very much to find things going so wrong, and he walked out to reason with them about their violence. He was so loving and kind and gentle to them, that they could not refuse to hear him. Once they turned back when they met him, though they were all armed, marching to Bristol to make an attack on the officers of government. When matters had become more quiet, after this, I went one evening to hear him preach, and to see the colliers. Oh! it was a sight, my children, you would not soon have forgotten, to see these poor men, as they came crowding up, many of them just out of the deep coal-pits, to hear the voice they loved so much. The pulpit was only a rough plank laid over a barrel; but the *word* was not less powerful for that. His text was: 'The trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised.'

"The tears came streaming down those poor grimed and blackened faces when he said something like this—though I can't re-

member exactly his words, I shall never forget the meaning of what he said: 'The *dead*, yea, *all* the dead must arise, my friends! and we must each one of us stand in the immediate presence of the great and holy God, to answer for the deeds we have done whilst in the body. Mountains can not cover ye then, nor rocks hide ye from the wrath of God! But Jesus can throw over ye the robe of his righteousness; and he stands now full of love in our very midst, waiting with outstretched arms, to receive ye, if ye will but turn to him; oh! then, *now*, while ye may go and be saved, surely ye will not refuse to hear the call of a waiting *Saviour!* Ye could not be so ungracious as to let him call and wait and plead in vain — only for your poor sinful hearts.' My own heart was melted, dear children, for the first time. I could not stand against such an appeal as that. I went home to weep and pray, and at last found the peace which nothing has ever disturbed, as long as I keep my eyes fixed where Mr. Wesley pointed them — upon Him who has invited

us to put our trust under the shadow of his wing. Trouble only comes when we turn away from Him."

These recollections of the past had greatly excited and animated good old Mrs. Banks. The children ceased from their different occupations, to watch with interest her earnest countenance, and listen to her thrilling descriptions which seemed to bring the whole scene vividly before them. She next took up a small volume in a bright cover, saying: "This is a little book me niece sent me — 'Montgomery's Poems.' He was born near me old home, and I saw him many times as an infant in the arms. I hev seen, too, and spoken to the mother of the young lady that they tell me he's been sad a long time about. He's a great poet—the greatest of poets in affliction! And yet he knows how to praise too. I should never get tired if you young ladies were to begin reading his pieces to me, so I'd better not ask for any. But may be Miss Clara or Miss Annie you'd read me this little scrap I've cut from a newspaper; my eyes are too dim now

except for big print; but I keep this for my young friends to read to me sometimes, not hoften though, for hit's most more than I can bear."

As Annie was standing next her, she put the paper in her hand, and she read as she was desired, Campbell's piece on visiting the home of his forefathers. Her voice was singularly sweet, and her reading always very touching and beautiful; but of late a new chord had been struck in her young heart, which added a deeper pathos to her tones; and she had not proceeded far, before good old Mrs. Banks bowed her head upon her breast and sobbed aloud. The home of *her* childhood was passing before her, and the desolation of years in one moment swept over her soul! But why should that home so long viewed through the dim vista of years and the softening shadows of the past rise so vividly and with such poignant regret before those eyes which must, ere many more lengthening shadows can have fallen round her pathway, open upon the glories of the heavenly inheritance? Surely after so many

years of calm endurance and patient waiting, Satan can not tempt that meek spirit to repine, or cease looking towards that beautiful city which is every day drawing nearer and nearer. There was only a moment's struggle, however, before the aged pilgrim, with an evident effort, regained her composure, and, taking up the words of the last stanza, in a subdued voice repeated:

"Be hushed, my dark spirit! for wisdom condemns
When the faint and the feeble deplore;
Be strong as the rock of the ocean which stems
A thousand wild waves on the shore.
To *bear* is to *conquer* our fate."

"Mrs. Banks," said Annie, after a few minutes' silence, looking at the old woman with gentle sympathy: "Would you not like me to read for you now, my mother's favorite chapter about our *new home?*" She took up the Bible, as she asked this question, and opened it at the chapter in Revelation to which she referred. Mrs. Banks gladly assented; and when it was finished, said, with her usual placid smile:

"Thank you, dear, sweet child. It is a blessed thing to look forward to a home where we shall meet no more sad changes, and from whence we shall go no more out *forever*."

Mammy now suggested that it was time for them to go, and they bade the kind old nurse good-by. Alice whispered in her ear:

"I don't know what you must do with the house and garden, but you can bring Eliza and Pussy to Belmont, and *indeed* you *must* come and take care of us while mamma and papa are away."

The next morning our little friends left the city, delighted with their trip, and impatient to tell of all the wonders they had seen and heard.

CHAPTER V.

Two weeks of busy preparation had passed since the children's visit to the city. Mrs. Banks had come, and the farewells of friends and neighbors were over. To-morrow the travellers were to start, and nothing now remained but the packing of a few last things. The children in Mrs. Ludwell's nursery were sound asleep, and "mammy" was snoring in her soft, feather bed, close to little Phebe's cradle.

"Poor little things! how soundly they sleep, all unconscious of the anxiety and suffering which it costs their poor mother to leave them, or how they may miss her while she's gone," said Mrs. Ludwell, as she walked round from one little bed to another, having risen from her own restless couch, and come, full of maternal love and solitude, to take a last look at them before she composed herself for sleep. "O God! protect, and bless,

and keep all my little ones safely," she exclaimed, throwing herself upon her knees and weeping violently, after a long pause, during which the workings of her agitated countenance showed how many apprehensions and anticipations of evil were conjured up before her anxious mind; and, weeping still, she returned, and laid herself down to pass a long wearisome night, struggling with hope and fear, duty and inclination; for although she was learning to look unto the Lord for help in time of trouble, she was wholly ignorant of the great secret of *leaving with him* the burdens which she brought, and waiting in quiet faith and patience for him to fulfill his promise: "Cast thy burden upon the Lord and he shall sustain thee." Nevertheless, He, who has also promised not to "break the bruised reed, or quench the smoking flax," listened with forbearing tenderness to these first faint utterances of her dawning faith and received into his faithful keeping the little flock so doubtfully intrusted to his care.

Calmly and steadily Mrs. Lee had em-

ployed herself with her arrangements, without a wavering thought, after having once decided that duty to her sick child, demanded this sacrifice of her own feelings in leaving the other two, who were not less dear to her heart.

March had set in mildly, and Alice had felt the good effects of the balmy air. But the unavoidable excitement of this last day had brought back, to-night, the flush of fever to her cheek, and held her eyes waking till a late hour. The door leading into Annie and Tommy's little room was open, and they had apparently both been long sound asleep. But still her mother sat by her bedside, softly stroking her throbbing temples, and talking gently, or singing hymns to soothe her agitated nerves.

"If I do ever get well, dear mother!" said Alice at length, "how shall I repay you, or ever thank you half enough for all these tedious hours of the night which you have spent by my sick-bed. You do not know how strong your love makes these verses seem, 'When my father and my mo-

ther forsake me, then the Lord will take me up;' and: 'Yea, *they* may forget, yet will not *I* forget thee.' O mother! how inexhaustible *that* love must be!"

"'It passes all understanding,' does it not, my daughter?"

"Indeed it does. I love sometimes to lie perfectly still, and just try to think of something with which to compare it, but I'm lost in its hight and depth and length and breadth." As she said this, she closed her eyes and lay as if in deep thought, and after a while her mother, finding that she had fallen asleep in this position, rose, and having undressed, took her little Bible and read a few verses upon which she pondered carefully, then humbly kneeling before her Heavenly Father, prayed long and fervently—making mention of his goodness and mercy, confessing her sin and weakness, and her rebellion in times past, when in order to make her meet for his glorious kingdom, he had seen fit to employ upon her hard heart the sharp tool of suffering, she asked for grace now to trust herself and children wholly in his

hands, and in every trial to be taught to to say: "Not my will, but thine be done." When she had finished praying for herself and for the world at large, she went, as she was accustomed every night, to offer at the pillow of each sleeping child petitions for *especial* blessings and mercies for them, according to their several necessities.

Annie was lying still awake, and waiting, with a full heart, for her mother to come to her bedside, for she had discovered this to be her habit some weeks before, and had felt so deeply impressed by this great anxiety for her spiritual welfare, that she had herself awakened to a sense of the value of her immortal soul, and the comparative unimportance of every other concern in life. Day after day her prayers ascended with increasing earnestness, and day by day she felt more deeply her own depravity, and need of a Saviour's reconciling blood. Still there came no sweet sense of pardon; her heart was troubled and her mind clouded by a consciousness of guilt and a fear of God's anger. Yet she could

not at first find courage to open her heart upon this subject, even to that tender mother to whom she confided all else so entirely; but had tried, as far as she could, to conceal from every one her depression of spirits, and when *this was* observed, it had always been attributed to anxiety on account of Alice, to whom she was devotedly attached. But to-night she felt that she could no longer sustain alone the heavy burden which weighed her spirit down, and as she listened to her mother's whispered prayer for her, she sobbed aloud, and rising, threw her arms around her neck, saying:

"Dear, dear mother! how I wish that God would hear your prayers and make me a child of grace; but it seems hardly worth while for me to pray; my heart grows more hardened and sinful every day, and I am so full of evil passions and unholy thoughts. Do tell me what I must do, for I have prayed and prayed, but I fear God does not hear me."

Mrs. Lee was much touched, and pressed

her weeping child to her heart, saying slowly and solemnly:

"*Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou* shalt be saved! In whose name, my child, have those prayers been offered? and whose merits have you pleaded to procure the favor of your offended but *merciful* Father in Heaven? Are you looking to *yourself* or *Jesus* for salvation?"

"I try, mother, to look only to Jesus, but I can not love and trust him. I can not cease sinning against him, and I am afraid he has given me up, and will not save me."

"If you do not love and trust him, Annie, must it not be because you do not *believe* all that the Bible tells you of *his* love to *you?* Can you believe that he *so loved you* as to give his own life to save *you* from the punishment which your sins have deserved, and yet withhold from him that confiding love which he claims from you in return?"

"I know, mother, that he died for sinners, and that if we repent and believe, he will save us—that is what I have been *trying* to do, but it must be that I do not repent

enough; for I can not feel that God has pardoned me, and I believe I am more wicked than I ever was before, although I am sure that I want to do right, and I constantly pray to be made pure and holy."

"The Bible, my dear, tells us of two classes, the self-*righteous*, who think they need no repentance and *desire no Saviour*, and the *lost*, whom Jesus came to *seek* and to *save*—but it does not speak of any poor lost ones who are trying to come to Jesus, and who desire his salvation, but can not obtain it. If you really feel yourself *lost*, remember that he is *seeking* to save you, not because there is any thing in you worthy of the love which moves him to deal so graciously with you, but because that love is so free, full, and infinitely great, that it reaches even one so hardened, thankless, and sinful as yourself, and he really *desires* to bestow upon you the blessings of pardon and peace with the *gift* of *eternal life*, far more than you have ever craved them for yourself. Do you suppose, then, that when you come to him in prayer, as he has told you to do, and ask

him to wash you with his blood, and cleanse you from those sins which make you so unhappy and separate you from your Heavenly Father, whom you desire to love and serve, that he will turn away from you because you do not repent *enough?* Is it not God's own Spirit which is now convincing you of sin, and is not this Spirit the gift which Jesus died to purchase for us? and if he has already of his grace and free will bestowed thus much upon you, be assured that he will not fail to add abundantly to what he has already done, if you thankfully receive, and perseveringly ask and believe. His blood and his atonement you must remember, my child, are not *purchased* by our repentance; they are *freely offered* to us—we have only to wash and be clean. Without repentance of course we can feel no desire for this cleansing, but as soon as we have the desire, there is the fountain *open* for *all sin and uncleanness.* Now, my child, deal honestly with yourself, search and try your own heart, and see if you have indeed this desire to be cleansed from *all* evil and to lead

an entirely new and holy life, then you will know certainly whether your repentance is of the *right kind*—that it is *enough*, I can not say, for like every other fruit of the Spirit, it needs to be increased, and like every offering which we present unto the Lord, it needs to be purified; nevertheless, persevere in prayer, and 'He who has begun a good work in your heart, will make it perfect in the end.' "

"Mother," answered Annie, after a silence of some moments, "I am very sure that I do desire, above every thing, to be rid of my sins. I can not tell you how I sometimes loathe myself on account of them."

"Then, my child, you have only to *believe* and to accept the *free gift*; and can you refuse the poor return of your polluted heart to Jesus, who has asked for it again and again, and is asking for it now? Are you willing to make the surrender, and renouncing yourself and every other dependence, to become wholly his for time and for eternity?"

"O mother! most gladly and thankfully,

if he will really accept me; for I long to feel that he is *my* Saviour, and I am weary of my sins, weary of my strivings, and weary of *myself*."

"Go then, my dear child, on the faith of his own words, 'Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out:' tell him all this; and hold nothing back, but offer *all—body, soul*, and *spirit*, and see if he will not accept the gift, unworthy as it is."

Annie knelt, and in the solemn stillness of that midnight hour, made an entire consecration of herself to God. As she prayed, a deep peace, such as she had never known before, stole upon her heart, and she felt that God was affixing his seal to the bond which made her his forever. Her mother's silent prayer ascended for her, at the same time, mingled with devout thanksgiving, as she acknowledged that God had in this case already fulfilled to her his promise: "While they are yet speaking, I will hear." And when at length both had laid them down to rest, sweet, quiet, and refreshing sleep soon closed their eyes.

Annie was indeed, for a few moments, disquieted, as she thought of the approaching separation from her mother, with fears lest, when left to herself, she should not always be able to see things in the same clear light in which they had just been presented to her.

"What should I do if I am overcome by the temptation to doubt God again, or how shall I know just what I ought to do when I am *trying* to choose the right?" she asked herself tremblingly. But the question seemed to be answered by a voice softly whispering within:

"Jesus, my strength, my hope,
On thee I cast my care,
With humble confidence look up,
And know thou hearest my prayer;
Give me on thee to wait,
Till I can all things do;
On thee, Almighty to create,
Almighty to renew."

CHAPTER VI.

THE weather was as fine next morning as could have been desired for the travellers, and great was the excitement among the children when the bustle commenced of bringing down the baggage. Charlie found full scope for the exercise of his energies in moving carpet-bags and bandboxes, and in running on messages for the servants. Clara stepped out early into the conservatory and cut two bouquets, which were placed on the breakfast-table, at her mother's and Alice's place, and one beautiful white rose-bud was reserved for her Aunt Annie. With forced cheerfulness the family seated themselves at the richly laden board, seeming determined to drown in bright anticipations and kind attentions to each other the saddening reflection that they were taking the last meal which they should enjoy together for many months. Alice was not

often well enough to be down so early, but this morning she felt stronger, and had made an unusual effort. With fond admiration, every eye followed her as she moved gracefully round, bidding good morning, and adding some little playful remark to each in her bright, winning manner. And then having claimed a seat at her uncle's right hand, she sat by him in her neat travelling dress, with her golden hair falling in light ringlets around her head and shoulders, and her dark blue eyes, with their peculiarly lovely expression of deep, tranquil thoughtfulness fixed gravely upon *him*, as he discussed some plan referring to their future route, or beaming with kindly light as she turned to caress one of the little ones, who, climbing on the back of her chair, claimed a morning kiss before they eat their breakfast. There was a faint tinge in one small spot on her pale cheeks, which deepened or faded with her slightest motion, adding an indescribable charm to her frail, shadowy loveliness. A tear stole into her uncle's eye, as he watched it coming and going, and

thought: "Even so flickering, so uncertain is her own precious life. Let but one rough blast blow upon this sweet flower, and it must perish forever from our sight." Alice saw the tear, but was wholly unconscious of having caused it. She thought he was saddened as the time drew nearer for him to leave his own little ones, and rose quickly from the table, taking up her flowers, and put her arms caressingly round his neck, as if to hold them up before his face, as she said aloud playfully:

"Uncle, you haven't admired my lovely flowers *half enough!* I'm afraid you are a *little* jealous because Clara did not gather them for you; but you shall smell them until your heart is softened, when you remember how much your poor little sick niece enjoys them."

And then as she withdrew them, after having succeeded in fascinating him into a smile, she imprinted a fond kiss on his cheek, whispering very softly in his ear: "Trust them all, dear uncle, in our Heavenly Father's hand. *He* will keep them *safely* for you."

Mr. Ludwell looked up, and was quite overcome as he met the sweet look of sympathy in her face, and gradually understood her meaning. Rising from the table, he put his arm round her waist and led her towards the fire.

"O my child!" he said, pressing her closely to his heart, "how you do bring back to me my poor lost sister—my sweet, sweet Alice! But I must not allow myself to think of her now. There, you are beginning to cough—keep in this little corner close to the fire, and don't use your voice any more at present. I must go and see what your aunt is after."

And seating her in an arm-chair, he left the room, but stood some moments after he had closed the door behind him, listening, with a sharp pang, to the hard cough which seemed as if it must rend in pieces her delicate frame. And when this ceased, she was so exhausted, that her mother laid her on the sofa, where, pale as a marble statue, she slept until the carriages were ready.

They were going only as far as General

Lee's this first day, in order to divide the journey to Washington, where they were to spend a night, proceeding from thence, by easy stages, to Baltimore, and embark there in a sailing packet for Liverpool, and afterwards to the south of France, and Italy, or Switzerland.

At last the hour for parting came, and amidst tears and sobs, loving farewells were uttered. Then the precious invalids, surrounded by every comfort which the most tender thoughtfulness could provide, set off on their long and perilous journey. On the steps of the portico, or behind the stone columns, crowded servants and children, to catch the last glimpse of the two carriages, as they drove through the long winding avenue of elms. Clara was still weeping bitterly, but already the tears were almost dry upon the cheeks of the younger children. Frank having a short holiday at this time, had gained his father's consent to accompany him to Washington, to escort his cousins who were to come in the carriage as it returned, after having deposited the tra-

vellers in Baltimore. Mounted on his sleek little pony, he galloped off, turning occasionally to remind his sisters and brothers that it would be only a short time before he returned with their cousins. Annie Lee was at her mother's window, supporting with her arm her lovely little blue-eyed brother, who was standing on the deep old fashioned window-seat, to get a good view. It had required her utmost self-command to suppress her feelings whilst bidding adieu to her beloved sister, whom her mother had cautioned her not to agitate. Now, as she leaned her head on Tommy's shoulder, floods of tears came to relieve her aching heart. The little fellow regarded her for a while with the deepest concern, stroking and kissing her face by turns. At last he whispered softly :

"Sister Annie, *don't* twy so, please! I am afwaid you'll make Jesus andwy with you. Mother said it was his will for sister Allie to be sit and do away from us, and that we must twy to want his will to be done, if we want to please him."

"Thank you, sweet little brother, for putting me in mind. I'll try to behave better; but I'm sure Jesus is sorry for me, too, and if he was here, he would weep with me, and comfort me, as he did Mary and Martha," answered Annie, forcing back her tears, and returning her little brother's endearments.

"But, sister," said the child again, looking up in her face, thoughtfully, "an't it vewy stwange that Jesus makes people sorwy when he don't like to? I should think he wouldn't do so."

"Tommy, darling, you mustn't forget that mother said it was for *our good;* that just like the doctor has to give physic to dear sister Allie to make her *body* well, Jesus sends us trials to cure our *souls* of sin; that *he* is a wise physician, and knows just what every body needs; and as he wants us all to go to heaven, and is very good and loving, he does what is really best for us, though *that* often makes us suffer at the time, and though he does not take pleasure in giving us pain. *Now* you don't think it '*stwange*,' do you?"

"No; I thint *that's* just wight, betause we never, *never* tould do to heaven if he didn't turn our souls and mate us dood."

This little talk with Tommy had quite calmed Annie, and now she turned her thoughts entirely to him. Trying to amuse him so that he would not feel lonesome, she took out his blocks and helped him to build houses, and then to float little paper-boats in the basin of water, until, tired of play, he asked her to tell him a good long pretty story while she sewed; and while she was doing this, he dropped asleep in his little arm-chair, with his head lying in her lap. She then took him up tenderly and laid him on his bed.

"He will be just like *my own* child now, and will love me so dearly. And oh! how careful I shall be of him to keep him from being sick or from missing dear mother in any way," she thought, as she smoothed down his short frock and arranged his pillow, with a heart full of the fondest affection. Then, as she was about to leave him and take up her work again, she turned once

more, drawn by an irresistible impulse, and kissed repeatedly his white dimpled shoulders and coral lips, until he turned, though unconsciously, from her, with a sweet smile which put in play the dimples in his cheek, and made it doubly hard to tear herself away.

Meanwhile some of Mrs. Banks's young charge down-stairs were growing rather unmanageable. As soon as the first burst of sorrow was over, even before their tears were well dried on their cheeks, the spirit of mischief had revived, and they began looking round for some unusual mode of amusement, which would at the same time have the charm of novelty, and indicate their freedom from restraint and authority. George, seeing Uncle Lemuel, the dignified, pompous old gardener, very busy moving some of his large green-house plants with the assistance of Milo, seized the end of the garden-hose, and mounting a hogshead, surprised him with a sudden and violent shower upon himself and his assistant. Setting the tree down quickly, Uncle Lemuel started back to avoid

the wetting, which for a moment he supposed accidental; but George, enjoying highly his discomfiture, turned the water again upon him, and wherever he moved the stream pursued him. Highly indignant, at length the old man drew himself up to his full height, which was not inconsiderable, presenting quite an imposing figure, dressed in his favorite holiday suit, a pair of "ol massa's" shorts and tight long stockings, which he had put on, as he said, "in honor of seeing mas' Edward and Miss Emma sit out on dere gret journey." So he stood erect to receive another shower, eyeing George with a look which might have annihilated a less hardy subject, saying at the same time, in the tone of a martyr:

"Go on, my young massa; play out your mischif, pon an ol servant what never done you no harm; but worked for you, and them ware before yer, too, night and day, in cole an' hot, wet an' dry. But I *jes* wish mas' Edward war back to see yer at it. Never mine, young massa, yer day got to come yit. You got to grow ol and

stiff, and yer heare to whiten; and de time's comin', too, for yer to lie down in yer grave. Den, I boun', de worms gwine to show yer how much *dey respecs* yer body 'case it '*white!*' Dere's *one* to show yer, too, mas' George, dat white people's got a master well as black. And what yer gwine to do, I'd like to know, when *dat* time come?"

George's hand slackened now through sheer merriment, and he threw himself back to laugh at Uncle Lemuel's tirade, when the old man, taking advantage of his being off his guard, sprung forward in an instant, and dragging him down from his elevation, carried him off to Mrs. Banks, with com plaints of his ill-treatment. Clara had witnessed the proceeding from the window above, and could not help laughing to see Uncle Lemuel's pomposity for once taken down; and as he was by no means a favorite with his fellow-servants, they too enjoyed the scene, and tittered audibly as he passed them on his way to Mrs. Banks, dripping like any water-dog, and with George submit-

ting to be led by the hand, because his laughter made him too weak to resist.

"O fie! fie! George; I did not think ye'd hev been so little of a gentleman," said Mrs. Banks reproachfully.

"Why, Mrs. Banks, I was only ducking him; he believes in washing, and's very fond of parading himself before folks, so I thought I'd just take him down a little," replied George, with a right saucy laugh.

"*Now*, I spose, mas' George, yer tink yer've improved yer conduc by talkin' so. O boy! I tell yer, yer's got to learn."

"There, Lemuel, you had better go now quickly and dry yourself. I am sorry Mister George should hev treated you so, and I dare say he's sorry by this time himself, or at any rate will be by and by," said Mrs. Banks.

"Now, Mister George," she added, turning to George, after Uncle Lemuel had retired from the scene, "you had better stay here in the house with me for a little while, for you hev done very wrong to

treat a faithful old servant of your father's so unkindly. I did not expect it from you, and I think you did not know how much harm you might hev done. It's no trifle, I can tell you, for such an old man to be wet to the skin so, while heated with his work, too. If he should be very sick from it, you would not enjoy thinking of your fun much, I'm sure."

"He's not so easy to make sick, Mrs. Banks; he's too tough for *that!*" answered George, beginning to look sheepish, and whittling a piece of wood.

"Mrs. Banks! I'se brought mas' Henry to you, ma'am, to show what he been doin' in his ma's room. Did you ever see sich a a thing as this ma'am?" broke in Marion at this moment, as she entered, bringing in her hand the fragments of a large and beautiful vase, and with a countenance expressing the greatest vexation.

"Dear me! how did *that* happen, Marion?" asked Mrs. Banks, despairingly.

"Jus' by mas' Henry's mischief, ma'am," replied the angry maid. I was cleanin' up

missus' room thoroughly, as you told me, an' while I was a sweepin' down cobwebs from the ceilin' and the walls, mas' Henry stept up behind me and knockt the brush clear out of my hand, so it fell right accrost de mantel-piece an' throwed dis off. I does wisht master and missus never had gone away from dis house, or dey'd come straight back agin. Little dey'd see of tother side de worl, ef I could a kept 'em here, *I know!*"

"Mister Henry! Mister Henry! what's to be done? Your mother valued that pretty vase for some especial reasons; and only to think of your having broken it before she'd been gone a good hour from the house. I don't know what kind of a letter I must write her, nor how long I shall be able to stay in such a mischievous house, I am sure! You must stay here now along with George until you can behave better," said poor, discomforted Mrs. Banks.

After a little while Susy and Alice came in, looking tired and restless.

"Mrs. Banks, how far has mother got by *this time?*" they asked.

"It's only a bit after ten, my dears, and they travel slowly; so I expect she won't get to your grandpa's for an hour yet."

"O dear! and it will be so long before she comes back again! I'm so tired of being without her already," said Alice.

"So am I," said Susy; "nothing seems about the place like it used to."

"I am very sorry for you, me dear children; but you must try to cheer up and to be useful; *that's* the way to make time fly. Do you remember what the little hymn says? 'Satan finds some mischief still for idle hands to do.' You had better come help me to work, for I've got a great deal to do, putting away the nice things that you might break or spoil in your play, and by and by, your things must be moved out of the nursery into the great octagon parlor, where you are going to sleep now, right next to me; then Cousin Annie and all will be close together."

"In the octagon parlor, Mrs. Banks! Why, how can we sleep there?"

"And why not, children, if your beds are made there for you, just as they are in the nursery?"

"Why, Mrs. Banks! don't you know it's *haunted?*"

"Haunted by what, I should like to know?"

"By Aunt Alice's ghost! Mammy and all the servants say that she comes in the night, and plays on her harp that's in that room."

"O my dear children! *that* is all an idle tale! You must not let the servants fill your minds with such stuff. They are poor ignorant creatures, and don't know any better. You wouldn't have any reason, I can tell you to be afraid of your Aunt Alice if she could come back; but she's at rest in heaven, and depend upon it, nothing in this world would tempt her to come back here again. You shalt go with me into the room, and I will show you her sweet picture. When you hear me tell how sweet and lovely she used to be, you can not be afraid any more."

CHAPTER VII.

TIMIDLY, still with their curiosity and interest fully awakened, the children followed Mrs. Banks into that mysterious apartment, which for many years had never been opened, except at long intervals, to be cleaned and aired; these times being carefully chosen when their father was away from home. Near its threshold they had rarely ventured; and if by chance they found themselves approaching it in their plays, they hastened frightened from the spot.

Mammy and another servant were now employed in fitting it up for their use. There was a great deal of richly-gilded and carved furniture in the room, and in the recess of the bow-window stood *the harp* of which they had heard so much; near it was a small music-stand with a piece of music open upon it, as if the performer had just left her place, expecting to return in a moment to her occu-

pation there. And so it had remained for sixteen years—just as when the last notes of the plaintive ballad died upon the lips of the child-like bride when she was leaving the home where her bright spirit had cheered the declining years of her venerable parents. With eyes riveted upon this instrument, the children at first clung closely to the side of their old friend, whose composed and quiet manner soon, however, somewhat reässured them. She advanced into the room and stood before a large painting reaching almost to the ceiling, and filling up a large portion of the length of the wall

It represented a family scene. The father, a middle-aged man of noble appearance, seated in a large arm-chair before a round table by the blazing fire, with books piled carelessly by his elbow, rested on the table, as he held up his newspaper to the light. His eyes, however, were evidently wandering from his paper to the opposite part of the room, where, glancing above his spectacles with a look full of amusement and pleasure, he watched the movements of a group who occupied the

corner of a great high-backed sofa. This group consisted of a lady simply yet elegantly dressed, surrounded by her three children. The eldest, a handsome youth of about fifteen years, with a full face, florid complexion, and an abundance of waving brown hair, was resting on the arm of the sofa and looking up into his mother's face with an expression of earnest entreaty, while seated at her mother's side was a dark-haired little girl of twelve, dressed in a white slip with a broad blue sash and sleeve-ribbons; her face turned towards her brother's, and with one hand resting on her mother's shoulder, and the other extended, as if for something the mother held behind her, who, with a mild and gentle countenance, seemed to be smilingly refusing the request which her two children were pressing so eagerly.

A little fairy-like creature, with laughing blue eyes, golden curls, a forehead smooth and pure as the whitest marble, full red lips, just parted enough to show two little pearly white teeth, and dimpled cheeks, glowing with the bright flush of youth and health,

stood in front of the rest, with her hands gleefully clasped together as she laughed merrily at the jest lurking in her mother's quiet yet mischievous smile. She seemed several years younger than her sister, though they were dressed exactly alike.

"Oh! what a beautiful picture; what *sweet* little girls! and such a pretty boy! just as old as brother Frank, I do believe! and he's got eyes almost exactly like his too! Mrs. Banks, please tell us who they are?"

"Did you ever see any body like that little girl with the dark hair?"

"Yes, I have. It's very much like Cousin Annie, but a good deal prettier," said George.

"Perhaps, Georgie, that's because it's a painting; it is Cousin Annie's mother, however."

"Is *that* Aunt Annie? Doesn't it seem funny that she was a little girl like that, once on a time? I must go and call Cousin Annie and Clara down to see it," said Susy.

"Here's sister, now, coming by herself!" said little Alice, as Clara presented herself at the open door, plainly questioning with her

face the meaning of this assemblage in the octagon parlor. She was quickly informed of the new plan, and had her attention drawn to the picture.

"I suppose that must be Aunt Annie, when she was a little girl, and grandpa and grandma Ludwell, with poor Aunt Alice; and dear papa I'd know any where," she said, looking up where the others pointed.

"How nice they all look! I wish I had been alive then, and could have known them!" said Alice.

"Known *who*, Alice? You silly little thing! How *could* you have known them, when you warn't even born! Why, child, you are hardly out of your egg-shell yet!" said Henry, looking very wise and patriarchal.

"Well, Henry, I only said I *wish* I had been born then; that an't any thing," said Alice timidly.

"Where was *I*, then, Mrs. Banks, and Alice, and all of us? Was we at grandpa's house with mamma?" asked little Emmy.

"No, my child, you were not in this world at all."

"Oh! then I must have been in heaven! wasn't I?"

"Your heavenly Father had not made you yet, so you were no where."

"I do not see how that *can* be! and I don't know how God can see us and hear us all the time, and get into places where the windows and doors are all shut, without making a hole or any thing," said Susy, with a thoughtful, puzzled look; "but now," she added, moving towards the door, "I *must* run and bring Cousin Annie and Tommy down."

The noise she made in opening and shutting the door wakened Tommy up. Annie quickly brushed over his curls, and they went down with Susy to join their young companions.

"Oh! what a sweet wittle mamma!" said Tommy, as Susy showed him his mother.

"Will she ever be wittle like that again?"

"*No*, Tommy! How could she be?" She's grown up now, and people don't grow little again," said Susy.

"I believe I'm as silly as Alice," said Clara; "but I can't help having a kind of

feeling as if I should like so much to have known papa years ago, when he was young. I wonder what he and aunt Annie are begging grandpa for in the picture? I think I can see now how he thanked her, if she did it at last. I believe I would do any thing in the world papa was to ask me, just to hear him say, 'Thank you,' with his sweet, kind smile."

"Well, my children, come to dinner now, and I will tell you while we are at the table about this picture; and afterwards we will come back to see something else I've got to show you in here," said Mrs. Banks.

Dinner was much earlier than they were accustomed to have it, and the meal a very simple one.

"Dear children," said Mrs. Banks, when they were all seated, "don't you think it is very good in our heavenly Father to give us so many blessings? Look at your beautiful home and think that our Lord Jesus had not where to lay his head, and remember how many of you there are to love

each other, while but a very few poor people cared any thing for him; he was often very lonely and sad for our sakes, and went for days without tasting food — fasting and praying for us, while he gives us every day our daily bread. Now, won't you fold your hands, and help me to thank him for his great goodness?"

There was a moment's pause, and some little hesitation among the children; but it would have been almost impossible to refuse any thing asked so persuasively, and with such a kind, affectionate countenance by the friend who was always doing something for their gratification, so that each of them presently folded their hands and looked down while they repeated after her, as she desired them, the simple grace: "We thank thee, our kind heavenly Father for all our mercies, for our beautiful home, dear parents, and brothers and sisters to love and comfort one another; and for wholesome food to strengthen our bodies. We pray God to bless and feed the poor, and make us very kind to those

who are not so well taken care of as we are, for Jesus' sake, Amem."

Mrs. Banks had Charlie placed on one side of her, and little Phebe, who was brought to table for the first time, on the other. The little lady was infinitely delighted at this elevation, and contributed not a little to the amusement and pleasure of her admiring young relatives, as she made quizical faces at *mammy*, who was stationed at the back of her high-chair to cut up her food, and show her how to use her little ivory knife and fork like sister Clara and cousin Annie—dropping many hints at the same time about soiling the spotless Marseilles bib which was fastened round her neck. By dint of keeping Charlie busy and amused, he was prevented from occasioning as much disturbance as it was his wont to do.

He was a chubby-faced, rosy-cheeked, little fellow, with mischief and fun lurking in every line of his countenance, and a bold, defiant air, indicating the dauntless spirit which no *threats* or *persuasions* could ever subdue; his disposition required the firmest

and most skillful management, and Mrs. Banks's interest had already awakened for him, in a peculiar degree; next to the little helpless Phebe, she seemed to love him more than any of her young charge, and took especial pains to divert and please him. She had more than once predicted that he would "make a remarkable man, one of these days, when he had sobered down a little, and sowed his wild oats."

"Remarkable bad one then, I boun,'" was *mammy's* rejoinder to herself, when she happened, on one occasion, to hear this prediction. Emmy was according to the nursery phrase, "the very apple of *her* eye," and her wrath was often drawn out towards Charlie, for his merciless persecutions of his little sister, who was the most frequent victim of his unaccountable propensity to pinch and bite. Owing to his mother's ill-health, and his father's constant occupation, he had been left very much to the care and control of the elder servants, who not at all understanding his character, usually found him intractable and rebellious. They often dis-

cussed his future prospects among themselves, deciding that he was a "young tiger now, and gwine to be somethin' wuss, some of these days." At other times, they would be won to a much more favorable judgment by his irrestible waggery or generous impulses. The good effects of grandpa's discipline had proved more lasting than was at first expected, and Mrs. Banks was very anxious to take advantage of this favorable opportunity of making the reformation, if possible, complete. Accordingly she spent a great deal of time in trying to study his character, and gain his affections, patiently bearing many inconveniences to which he subjected her by his Caliban tricks.

"Now about the picture, Mrs. Banks," said Clara, "you promised to tell why papa is looking so beseechingly at grandpa, you know."

Mrs. Banks in reply, gave the children the following recollections of their father's family, and of the scene which they saw pictured upon the canvas; we shall beg

however, to transcribe it without the peculiarities of her English pronunciation.

"O Miss Clara! I remember that evening very well. The picture, you see, was painted by a cousin of your grandfather's, from Old England: he had lost his wife, to whom he was exceedingly attached, and being very unhappy at home, came over to this country just after the Revolution, to stay awhile with your grandfather, whom he had known at college, and loved as a brother. I don't think you have ever heard your father speak of him, for he does not like to talk of those bygone days, when Mr. William Ludwell was here, because of the sad, sad events which followed. But this Mr. William Ludwell was a very smart man, a poet, a musician, and a great painter; and one evening as he was sitting near the chimney-corner, with his head bowed down, thinking about something very deep and strange, I suppose, as he often did, all of a sudden he started up, and clapping your grandfather on the shoulder, exclaimed: 'Now I have got you all just to suit me, and must take this family-group.

It will make a charming scene for your descendants; nothing could be more admirable, if you had purposely arranged yourselves for my brush.' Your grandfather smiled, and said he must remember that the family circle would be incomplete without having himself in too; they bantered each other and jested a bit about it, but it was at length decided that Mr. Ludwell should paint the picture, and so he took that winter evening scene, which I am going to describe to you.

"Your grandmother had the sweetest voice, to my ear, that ever I heard, and her children used to love to gather round her to hear her sing old ballads, which she accompanied with her lute — that very old-fashioned-looking lute which is put away now, on the top-shelf in your father's cabinet.'

"Oh! I have seen it there, and wondered what kind of an instrument it was," said Clara, "but how very different it is from the guitars we use now!

"Why, but sister, it's a *lute*, not a *guitar*, Mrs. Banks says," said Henry.

"And Mr. Wisdom, isn't a lute the same thing as a guitar?"

"No; is it Mrs. Banks?"

"I don't think Harry, you'll find any difference, except in the name; it is old-fashioned to call it lute, nowadays, that's all; but the reason you think it so strange-looking, Clara, is because you have only seen the Spanish guitar used. *This* is a very soft, sweet instrument, however, and I think it's a great pity it should go out of fashion. I love it all the better perhaps, because it reminds me of the days of my youth. It is this that your grandma is holding behind her in the picture. If you look closely, you can see the end with the little keys in it, peeping out from under her elbow," said Mrs. Banks.

"Yes, I did see something like that," said Susy.

"She had been playing," continued the old nurse, "and singing the ballad which, of all others, her children loved the most. It was taken from the Italian story of a young bride who in the midst of the marriage-feast,

went off in play to hide herself, and was never found till many years after, when her skeleton fell from a moldering old chest, which was being removed from her father's castle; for the lid had closed upon her with a spring-lock, and her old father as well as the young husband, had searched and search ed for her in vain, and, at length, gone sorrowing to their graves. Poor Miss Annie used always to cry when her mother sang that song, and Master Edward and merry little Alice would turn pale and look sad. Yet they would all three beg for it over and over again, but your grandmother thought it was a bad plan to sing it too often, and sometimes would refuse them; this time she was putting them off, laughing and pretending to think they asked for something else. When you see her, she had put the lute behind her, and would every now and then, touch the notes of '*Auld lang Syne*,' which made Master Edward quite impatient. Little Alice, however, laughed aloud, to see her mother so determined not to understand her sister and brother; and this made your

grandfather look up from his paper to see what was the matter. It was as pretty a scene as any family circle ever made, I am sure, and I was glad enough when your cousin proposed to paint it."

"Was it in this very house, Mrs. Banks, sure enough?" said George.

"Yes, Georgie, and in this very dining-room, which was your grandfather's library. There is the *same sofa*, and may be you did not notice the organ in the picture."

"No, *I* didn't," said Clara meditatively. "Mrs. Banks! tell us how you came to live with grandpa so long, won't you?" she continued.

"I suppose, Miss Clara, the reason I staid so long was, because I loved himself and his family, *so dearly*. We got acquainted in the time of the Revolution. Your grandfather's and grandmother's marriage would make a pretty story if it was written out. They had been a long time engaged to each other; but your grandmother's father was a Tory, and very bitter against Mr. Ludwell's party, so he would never consent to the marriage

of his daughter. He was a harsh stern old man when his will was disputed, and it displeased him that his child should continue to cherish a regard for any one whom he disapproved of, though she never meant to marry without his consent; only she did not marry at all, which was not his wish, as he thought he would like to leave her with a protector at his death, her only brother having died among the Indians; there were suitors enough for her hand too, to whom he would have made no objection. He grew more and more irrascible and harsh with her, in proportion as he thought she grew more obstinate; but she was a dutiful and loving daughter to him, notwithstanding, as long as he lived, never showing by word or look, ne pain she could not help feeling at his treatment of her. On his death-bed he acknowledged all this, and asked her forgiveness, I've heard. Then she married the man of her choice, Mr. Francis Ludwell, but they were neither of them young by that time. This was just before the battle of Lexington, and while your grandfather was engaged in

the great war that followed, your grandmother found me out in Richmond, and came to board with me, this place not being thought a safe asylum. You know it *was* taken possession of by the British afterwards. She staid with me two years, and Master Edward was born in my house. When it pleased God to take away my husband, your grandfather and herself would not hear that I should live any where but with them, so I came here, and we never parted until death came to separate us. God knows how kind they were to me in my affliction, and how dearly I loved them and theirs. They were kind to every one, and beloved by all who knew them. But we have sat a long time at the dinner-table, and you know there's another picture and story yet to come."

"Yes, that's about Aunt Alice! an't it, Mrs. Banks?" asked Susy.

Mrs. Banks assented, and they all very soon announced themselves ready to accompany her back to the Haunted Parlor. Leading them into the dark recess where the

harp was standing, Mrs. Banks opened the glass doors and closed blinds, which led out to the green terrace, and pointed up to the wall, where just opposite the harp, hung a beautiful painting they had not noticed before, in consequence of its position and the darkness of the recess. It was the picture of a fair and graceful young creature, in her bridal dress. Orange flowers were mingled with her light ringlets, and a soft lace-veil shaded modestly one side of her sweet, child-like face, which was suffused with a deep blush, and the laughing blue eyes were bent now upon the ground, drooping beneath the long dark lashes which rested on her cheek. For some moments there was perfect silence in that great room, and the children gazed with mingled admiration and awe, upon the lovely picture, which they had heard often described, and with the touching story of which they were imperfectly acquainted. Tears filled the eyes of good Mrs. Banks, and at length she murmured in tones of mournful affection :

"Dear, dear child! Oh! she was indeed as

dear to me as my own! How tenderly we *all* loved thee, sweet one! And yet not so well as He who has taken thee to himself—God's holy will be ever done!"

"And that is Aunt Alice; how very beautiful she must have been!" whispered Clara.

"Yes," said Annie in a very low, soft voice, shading at the same time her eyes with her hand, "almost as beautiful as my precious sister, and *so* much like her."

"Every one is struck with the resemblance, Miss Annie," said Mrs. Banks; then turning to the children, she continued: "Do tell me now, my dear children, how you can be afraid of any thing as pure and beautiful as that? Does your Aunt Alice look as if she would have hurt you while living? And if not *then*, you may be sure she could not *now*, when if she were to come to you at all, it must be from *heaven!*"

"Oh! but Mrs. Banks, her *ghost!* It's her ghost we are afraid of," said Susy.

"I have never felt so at all," said Annie.

"Mamma has talked to us a great deal about dear Aunt Alice, because she wants us to love her memory; but I never saw her picture before."

"What is her *ghost*, Susy, my child, but her *spirit*, which is now with God, and would not leave his presence for all that the world could offer her? It was God's spirit talking with hers, which made her, while she was here, as you see she looks, pure, gentle, and good, so that no creature could help loving her dearly; when I have told you about her sweet young life and its sad ending, you will try, I hope, to be like her, and will never again feel any thing but love for her memory, and sorrow for her early death," said Mrs. Banks, seating herself upon a low ottoman, with a crimson damask covering, while the children gathered round to hear her relation.

"Never was there, my dears," she commenced, "a family who loved each other more tenderly, than that of your grandparents; it always seemed to be the study of each, to make the rest happy—I don't know

why it was, though, unless there are some of his creatures, whom our heavenly Father marks from their birth with his own seal, and makes more exactly after his own image, that our dear little Alice never seemed, at home or abroad, just like any body else. She was the youngest in our house, four or five years younger than Miss Annie; her parents were growing old when she came to them, bringing such a light in her sweet face, as if angels had been smiling through her eyes, and though sometimes her laugh would ring merrily through the house, and she would trip lightly about, singing like any bird, and as if she had never heard of sorrow, yet only let her think that any one was sick or in trouble, that minute her lashes would droop, and her voice would soften until you felt as if she was talking to you with her *very heart* itself, instead of her tongue; her words too, seemed so wise and thoughtful, they made you forget she was only a child. Your grandfather's cousin William, who I told you, staid for several years here, and painted the other picture, used to say it

seemed to him so strange that it almost made his heart ache to hear her. I remember well one evening, when he looked at her for a long time, without saying any thing; then shook his head, and muttered to himself: 'Too ripe! she is too ripe to be left here long!' But as for the rest of us, I believe nobody else ever thought of her being taken away. She was never sick, never complained, or seemed to have any troubles of her own, but only seemed sent to bless and comfort others. Well, time wore on — 'Cousin William' went home when she was ten years old, but he laughed and said: 'Alice, I *must* have you for my child, one of these days. I am going to send my boy Frank over in a few years, to see if he can't persuade you to come and live with us in England; how long must he wait?' And she laughingly answered, 'In six years I'll be sixteen,' and cut a beautiful white rose-bud for him to carry to her promised bridegroom. In two years from that time, dear Mister Edward was married, though he was barely twenty-one, and went to live

at Lee Hall with your grandpa, who was a widower, and did not wish to part with his daughter. And it was not eighteen months before Miss Annie, too, left us, and went with your uncle Henry Lee, to live at the South. We found it very hard to give her up, and there were tears a plenty shed when she bade good-by. The two sisters seemed as if they never could separate, when they were clasped in each other's arms. It was a long way off, and a new country, to which dear, sweet Miss Annie was going, and Miss Alice felt very anxious about her, and was always thinking of something to do for *her*, as well as to cheer the old people up, for it seemed lonely enough when she was all that was left to them; but she was always speaking so hopefully of the time when her sister would come back, and planning changes and improvements to surprise her, that it seemed to cheat her parents into a sort of forgetfulness that her home was here no more; and then, too, Miss Alice never once forgot any thing that would please them. Every season she had something to entertain them with—

flowers in the spring and summer, and sweet music on her harp as she sat here, with the moonlight shining on her through the glass door. And the winter evenings passed quickly away with her reading and songs, until before they knew it, two years were gone since Miss Annie went to her new home, and five and half since Mr. William Ludwell returned to England, when, one day he arrived again, bringing with him his son Francis.

"I believe every one had forgotten the childish jest of Miss Alice, about her being sixteen, except myself, and I used to wonder what sort of a young man this 'Francis' was, and had a misgiving that Mr. William Ludwell meant more seriously than he seemed; but I don't think dear Miss Alice ever thought of it, except at first, when her Cousin William used to write letters to her father, which he said Alice must answer, and he would tell her what Francis was doing, and send some message from him, which the dear child at first used to answer, but after Miss Annie went away, and she began

to feel more of a woman, she would not write, except a short note sometimes, to tell how the family were. But now, when Mr. Ludwell brought in a handsome and elegant young man and introduced him as, 'my son Frank, whom I promised to bring in six years,' laughing and kissing Alice's cheek as he said it; the sweet young creature blushed and bowed to her young cousin, and then ran frightened out of the room, and it was hard to persuade her to go back; she would not, until her mother came and told her that she was behaving rudely in her own house. Then she came in, but looked pale and was very still all the first day; but her cousin was gentle, modest, and retiring in his manners, and kept out of her way. But I watched him, and found that his eyes followed her wherever she moved; and it made my heart bitter to see this, for the very reason that I could find no other fault with him. And, oh! it was hard not to keep a jealous guard over that precious jewel. After a while Alice knew him better, and would let him accompany her harp with

his flute, and they read and walked together; his father seeming always so pleased to see this, while her parents were quite blind to the danger I was dreading, for they seemed never to let the thought of parting with this their last child, come near to them. At last, however, their Cousin William told them that his jest was a sober fact, and that Frank wanted to ask their Alice's hand. It was not a pleasant thing to hear, you may suppose. Still they hoped that she would herself say no. But she did not; the sweet flower was won, and on her sixteenth birthday she was married in this very room to her cousin Francis Ludwell. It was strange to see how her parents schooled themselves to bear it. Miss Annie came from her distant home, bringing her first little infant daughter, whom she named after her sister. The child was baptized, and her aunt stood for her just a week before the marriage. And in the pleasure of welcoming home their absent daughter, they tried to forget the sad parting that was coming with the other.

But as for me, my heart sank within me as we made preparations for the bridal feast.

"The wax lights which were burning all over the house seemed rather to make all darkness around me; and I could not but begrudge Mr. William Ludwell the happiness he felt. It seemed to me as if he had not dealt quite fairly with us. Three days they staid at Belmont after the marriage, and then they left us for New-York, where they remained only long enough for this portrait to be taken. It was done by Mr. Stewart, who was a friend of Mr. William Ludwell, and was present at the marriage, so he was able to give the very expression of our darling child's face at that time.

"The morning after the bridal party left, your poor grandmother was wandering through the house with a desolate, sad heart, when she happened to come in here and find Alice's harp just as she had risen from it the evening before, and she said: 'Let it stay as it is until she comes again to take her own place there; perhaps it will help me to forget that my child is so very

far off.' Miss Annie staid as long as she could with her parents to comfort them, but her own heart was very sad; for a shadow had taken her sister's place at the hearth-stone—the shadow of a coming sorrow, which we felt without understanding. None of us told the others of our misgivings and our troubled dreams, yet every letter went full of fresh charges to be very careful, and to send tidings as soon as the ship sailed—then we heard that she was off. Your grandmother's chamber was the one just above this, which dear Miss Annie is using now, and one night she was lying awake, thinking of her child, and trembling at the loud gust which was blowing, when suddenly she heard the sound of music, which seemed to come from the harp in the room below. At first it was very faint and low, but presently became louder, then died almost away; but the next minute grew stronger again. Your grandfather tried to comfort her, saying it was only the wind coming in through some open window. Taking a light they went to see, and found that this was so.

Some one having left the glass-doors unbolted, the high wind had blown them open, and as the harp was just in front of them, it swept across the strings, making a soft, mournful kind of music as it rose and fell. Nothing could remove the painful impression which this accidental circumstance produced upon your poor grandmother. Indeed we all felt it more or less, and longed and prayed for tidings that our darling was safely landed on the other side of that great deep she was to cross. But week after week passed after we should have heard, bringing no word of hope or comfort, till at last the ship was given up for lost, and dreadful rumors came that she had fallen into the hands of pirates. Then some of the servants began to tell how they had seen Miss Alice all in white, glide through the glass doors and leave them open behind her the night their mistress heard the music; but we all knew that it was only one of their idle, superstitious tales, for every creature had been sound asleep except your poor grandmother,

and if they had not been, we should have known that it was impossible.

"Mr. Stewart had taken the picture in New-York, and it was not sent home until we had heard that our darling was lost. The sweet child had left a little note to come with it—the first part all so playful and like *herself;* but at the end a few last lines had been added which were blotted with several large tears. 'I see by your letters,' they said, 'that you all feel very anxious about me. I trust it may please our Heavenly Father to permit me once more to behold your dearly loved faces, but if not, I wish you to know how tenderly I love you all, and how much I thank you for your love to me, especially my dear parents; and most of all I thank them for my *Christian* education. All my trust is in our dear Lord Jesus, and I know that whatever he shall do with me will be both good and right, so I am willing either to live or die, whichever pleases him best.'

"The last order which your grandmother gave, was for the picture to be placed where

it hangs to-day. Then the room was closed, and only visited as a place of weeping. *Never, never*, have I seen such grief—so deep and still, wearing, day by day, the life away. Hand in hand your grandparents glided like shadows to their graves. The work of years was done in a few days. Mister Edward came to live with them, and Miss Annie staid, too, but nothing could keep them here more than a few months. Your grandfather was the first, and in three weeks his poor, heart-broken widow followed him. Our Heavenly Father knows what poor Mister Edward suffered, and may he show him mercy for his *too* bitter grief—poor fellow, he could see no love or pity in *One* who so afflicts his creatures. With dear Miss Annie it was different; God's spirit sanctified her sorrow, and every stroke seemed to soften her heart and draw it nearer to himself; her example and her conversation with your father I trust may be blessed; he has given his consent that this part of the house should be opened again. And it was thought best to occupy it first while he was gone: I have

for my part, but one wish, and that is, before I die to see this once more a Christian household honoring and fearing God, loving his name, and walking in his ways—cherishing no bitter resentment against Him who is indeed the fountain of love or refusing submission when he but does what He will with his own."

With subdued faces the children listened, so absorbed in the *thrilling realities* of the haunted room that they quite forgot their former superstitious terrors. When her account was finished, Mrs. Banks retired for nearly an hour to her own room. At sunset, however, she came out again and called her young friends to accompany her in a walk to see "Mister Sun" put his night-cap on. This summons soon gathered the little crowd about her, the younger ones, understanding her words literally, and being impatient to see the novel operation, while the elder ones smiled slightly with an evident consciousness of superior wisdom; but were not less curious to see what the old lady *could* mean.

She led them to a picturesque spot on

the western side of the house called "Mistletoe hill" from the luxuriant growth of this pretty plant which hung in rich drapery around the branches of two or three gnarled and twisted old oaks left standing on the top of the hill, the sides of which were embedded with uneven masses of blue granite covered with moss and lichen. The place commanded a beautiful view of the setting sun, and when they had reached it the children laughed merrily at finding that the "*night-cap*" was only a rich purple cloud fringed with gold, with which the sun seemed to cover his head as he suddenly dropped behind the mountain-tops, veiled with their light azure haze, now converted by his reflected beams into a sea of light. Then Mrs. Banks bade them all sit still awhile and watch the ever-varying clouds, reminding them that the great God by whom they were made, is also our *Father!* and that he has thus made all things *beautiful* in order that his children may delight in his works.

After repeating slowly and solemnly a verse or two of Scripture, she called upon

the children to join with her in singing, "The day is past and gone," and then bade them kneel down with her upon the rocks, and repeat together the Lord's Prayer, remembering as they did so that they were praying to him who made the clouds as the curtains of his chamber, and holds the wind in the hollow of his hand. When this simple form of family prayer was ended she said:

"Now, my dears, it is almost time for my little people to go to bed. You will find hens and chickens, ducks and geese going to roost, and the little birds snugging up in their nests. Uncle Lemuel, too, could show you some of his sweetest flowers shutting up their pretty eyes; and you know what the old proverb says: 'Early to bed and early to rise, makes young folks healthy, wealthy and wise.' Let us go home, therefore, and see what good food our Heavenly Father has provided for us; then the little ones must go straight to bed, and in the morning we shall see who will be ready to go with me to see

Mister Sun take off that pretty night-cap he has just put on."

"I will! I will!" shouted several voices at once.

When supper was ended, they all went with Mrs. Banks to the new comfortably arranged nursery. One corner with a small bedstead in it, was screened off for George and Harry—side by side stood the two appropriated to the couples, Susy and Alice, Charlie and Emmy, mammy's soft feather bed rising up between the latter and little Phebe's crib bedstead. They looked as nice and tempting as possible with their snowy counterpanes and pillows. The bright firelight was reflected on the gayly painted walls, and the children amused themselves playing with their own shadows, until Mrs. Banks called them to see her room, which opened into the nursery, promising that the door should remain wide open all night. Then, when she had heard each of them their evening prayer, she left them with mammy, who took her knitting and seated herself on a low stool by the fire, to wait until they

were asleep. Clara, Annie, and Tommy were to sleep in Mrs. Lee's room just over the nursery, while Annie's, which was over Mrs. Banks, was set apart for Lizzie and Fannie Forest. Clara and Annie took little Tommy up to put him to bed themselves, and for a long time he sat on his sister's lap, looking out at the bright stars, while she sang him hymns and told him Bible stories."

"Sister, I wonder what does make the stars shine so bwight? May be they are wittle angels' eyes," said Tommy; "and that mates my hymn say, 'May angels duard us while we sleep till morning light appears,'" he continued as if thinking aloud.

Annie and Clara exchanged a smiling glance at this childish notion.

"No, Tommy," said Clara; "they are not angels' eyes. They are little worlds like this we live in. What could have made you think they are angels' eyes?"

"Well, betause I was thinting a dood deal about there being so many, *many* of 'em, shining wight up over us like they tould see, till I thought the wittle ones

might be the wittle angels' eyes, and the bid ones Dod's eyes. But I don't know what you mean by wittle worlds lite this dreat bid one. Sister Annie, won't you tell me what that means?"

"I'll try to, Tommy. You know this world we live in shines very brightly with the light it gets from the sun, and so do the stars, but they are very, very far away, and so they just look like little specks to us."

Tommy looked very wonderingly in her face for some minutes, and then he said:

"Oh! my: I tant tell what that is, and I believe I'll do to bed; but I wish they was what I thought they was."

"Well, little brother! I think you had better go to bed, and to sleep, too," said Annie laughing, as she kissed him and laid him down.

Clara and she then seated themselves at the round table before the fire, with their sewing and drawing, and talked together over their mutual anxieties about their dear invalid travellers, until Marion came to undress them and put out the light. Annie

told her she might go when Clara was in bed, and with her little Bible in her hand, she stood thoughtfully before the window, recalling her last night's conversation with her mother, and the solemn covenant into which she had entered with her Heavenly Father.

Marion stopped when she had reached the door, and watched her face with apparent interest for a few moments, then stepping up to her, said in a kind yet humble voice:

'Miss Annie, I feels very sorry for you, and wisht I could do something to comfort you, miss. Don't you think it mought help you ef you was to read some o' them chapters in Job, you used to read to me last winter, when poor George died, and I was in sich trouble and sick besides?"

"Thank you, Marion; perhaps it would," said Annie very kindly. And, bidding her good-night, the maid left the room, much gratified at having, as she hoped, returned in some measure, "Miss Annie's" kind attentions to herself.

CHAPTER VIII.

"WELL, here we are, Alf, almost at the gate," said Frank, as his cousin Alfred and himself rode in advance of the carriage containing Alfred's two sisters.

"Yes; and we've had a famously brisk ride, for it's only half-past two," answered Alfred, taking out a small silver watch. "I wonder when Tom ever made his nags go so before! However, it was a light load—no baggage, you know, and it couldn't hurt them. Uncle Simon lags way behind with the trunks; I shouldn't be surprised if he didn't come before sun-down. What royal times we are going to have, old fellow, with our guns, dogs, and horses—doing just as we please—except the time we are in school every day."

"We've got *some body* else to please though, you know—good old Mrs. Banks; and to tell

you the truth, I'm not sure that I like being tied to an *old woman's* apron-string."

"Pugh! she'll not interfere with us—she's only a housekeeper, isn't she?"

"Why, she is *something more* than a *common housekeeper;* she's a *very old friend* of our family, and we are put upon our honor about regarding her wishes, and treating her with respect. Aunt Annie talks a great deal about her influence over us too, and all that sort of thing."

"What kind of an old lady is she then? Not nervous and fidgety, I hope—or an old Tartar either."

"Oh! no, she is kind enough; would take any trouble to do one a favor; but she is very particular about some things, and I'm afraid she'll be rather too pious in her way of talking to suit you and me."

"I don't like these people that are so mighty good—talking about religion all the time. Where did Mrs. Banks come from, any how?"

"She came from England a good many years ago; when she was first married, I be-

lieve · and lived at Belmont with my grandfather and grandmother Ludwell from the time my father was a little boy till they died. Then she used to come back to nurse us all when we were young babies. She nursed all down to the twins; and I do like her very much, though I can't help laughing at her sometimes, for she has a droll way of talking —putting *h*s before all her vowels, and pronouncing some of her letters very queerly— *u* for *o* in some places, and *w* for *v*."

"I suppose she says weal, wegetables, and winegar. Well, I'm glad she'll give us something to laugh at."

"Oh! you'll find plenty of that to do; the only trouble is to keep from doing it at the wrong time. Ah! I want to see how you will take all the marvellous things you hear about 'helder berries and sweet huile.' I expect your mouth will be stretched pretty wide."

"What in the world are they?"

"Ah! you'll see some of the famous 'helder hintement' the very first time you even scratch your finger. 'Made, me dear

Mister Halfred, from the helderberry, hand ha little sweet huile;' in other words, you ignorant young man—*elderberries* and sweet *oil.* Then there's a wonderful medicine called 'Mrs. Banks's *Diet* Drink,' made of sarsaparilla, molasses, and all sorts of things. It cures all diseases even before you are taken sick, I believe; and a fine chance we'll all have to drink it, this spring and summer."

"I think *we'll* turn rebels when it comes to that, Franky, my man, won't we? We'll leave all that business to the girls, poor things!" So saying, Alfred, laughing heartily, rode back to the carriage, and thrusting in his head, called out:

"Do you hear Lizzie and Fannie? You have got to be haninted hevery morning by good Mrs. Banks, with helder hintement and sweet huile, and to be dosed with sarsaparilla, molasses, and, I *expect*, a little brimstone, as that's English fashion, for your health."

"What are you talking about, Alfred?" asked the girls, amused at his comical face, but not understanding what he said.

"I am just repeating to you what Frank

told me a few minutes ago. I presume it's the truth; but you must question him if you are in doubt," replied Alfred, with a half-humorous, half-solemn expression.

"Come, Frank, do explain," said Fannie; "for I see brother is trying to hoax us about something or other."

Alfred drew himself up with mock dignity and rode off, pretending to be offended, and Fannie looked after him with a coaxing smile, but he would not return until he heard the merry peal of laughter from both girls, which followed upon Frank's repeating to them his account of the salves and diet-drink. The young people, then putting their heads together, were still planning mischievous tricks to be played with '*mother Banks's nostrums*,' as Alfred called them when they rode up to the house.

"There's the carriage, and brother Frank and Cousin Alfred!" shouted the children as they came rushing down into the porch to meet them. Clara and Annie had gone with little Tommy to an arbor in the woods to read, and not expecting the new-comers so early,

had not returned; but Mrs. Banks came out from the pantry, smiling kindly and smoothing down her white apron as she waited to give them a welcome to Belmont. Frank introduced his cousins to her, who returned her cordial salutations with their faces still full of the mirthful expression excited by their late conversation.

"Frank," said Mrs. Banks, "if you will take your Cousin Alfred to the room over the portico, which has been prepared for you and him, I will conduct Miss Lizzie and Miss Fannie to their chamber. Our dinner is very late to-day; but it is only waiting now for you to brush off your dust and come down."

"Where are the girls?" asked Lizzie and Fannie as they followed their guide up-stairs.

"They should hev been in before this; they went for a stroll in the woods some time ago. I have sent out a servant to bring them home; but can not think what ken hev kept them," answered Mrs. Banks, looking a little troubled.

When she had left them in Marion's charge

to prepare for dinner, the girls looked round the room in amazement.

"Why, I never was in this part of the house before," said Fannie. "I thought nothing would ever induce Cousin Edward to open it."

"It never was, Miss; at least, not since I been in the family, till Mrs. Lee come last fall, and she got master to let her go in the room next this, what used to be the old chamber, and put Miss Annie and Master Tommy in here," said Marion.

"I do believe this is the room that mother says poor Cousin Alice who was drowned used to sleep in."

"Yes," said Lizzie, "you know. She said it was next to her mother's chamber, and that Cousin Edward would not allow any one to go in either of them, so of course it is; but how plain and old-fashioned every thing looks. I should think they would have had handsomer furniture."

"Mrs. Banks done move out de *best* things, and lock up," said Marion with some pride. "You see she was obliged to do it too, cause

the boys was for spiling and breaking up every thing. Let *dem* alone, and dere'd not a been any thing whole, time master and mistus got back."

Clara, Annie, and Tommy were now seen approaching the house from the woods laden with moss and young leaves. They were running, and all three looked flushed and excited. Tommy was clinging to Annie, and turned his head constantly round, as if to see if any thing was following them. When near enough to be heard by Mrs. Banks as she stood in the doorway waiting anxiously for them, he called out: "Mrs. Banks, will you let Jerwy Thwip tidnap us? We saw him just now, and he's toming after us."

"Did you see Jerry Thrip sure enough?" said Susy and Henry, running out to meet them.

"Yes," said Annie, "indeed we did; and it frightened us home, you may be sure."

"Where was he?" asked George; "and what was he doing?"

"I'll tell you presently, Georgie, all about it; but let us speak to our cousins first," an-

swered Annie; and Clara and herself ran up to make Lizzie and Fannie welcome.

"Now tell us sister about old Jerry Thrip. Where you saw him, and how he frightened you," said Henry, when they were seated at the dinner-table.

"Well, you know," said Clara, "that Annie and I thought as dinner was going to be very late, and the morning was so bright and warm, we'd go to that old arbor that is in the deep part of the woods and read Comus Annie was to be the Lady, and wanted me to be Comus, but I objected, and fixed a queer, fantastic-looking stump for him, and took the part of Sabrina for myself, and made Tommy the two Brothers. I would get behind the stump and read Comus's parts though, and Annie tried to ventriloquize for Thyrsis, the attendant spirit, and teach Tommy to talk when the Brothers' turn came. We were having a great deal of fun doing this; for Tommy looked so comically grave and earnest, and lisped out the words so sweetly; but just as he was saying after Annie, 'List, list, I hear some far-off halloo break the silent

air,' we really did hear such a strange noise behind us or somewhere in the woods, we could hardly tell where. We hid at first because we were afraid to come out, and then we heard it for a long time. Annie said it was some body singing, but I thought it sounded more like calling cattle. We remembered about Jerry Thrip, and were frightened to death. At last the noise stopped, and we thought the person had gone, and started to come home. Annie stopped on the brink of the hill to get this moss, and just as she raised her head, there was old Jerry in his *red jacket*, sitting on a stone under a large hazel-bush, looking over towards the river. We screamed, and he turned round and looked at us with his dreadful blood-shot eyes till I thought I should have died. I couldn't move until he began to get up, and then my strength came to me, and we ran as fast as we could. I was thankful enough that we were most home before we saw him."

"Who in the name of wonder is Jerry Thrip?" asked Frank.

"He has come since you went away, but

no body knows who he is exactly. The servants say he is a very strange and wicked old man who was living all the winter in the village, prowling about the streets in his red jacket and long gray beard. The boys used to hoot at him and stone him when he went about, so that now he's come out here somewhere to stay. Jackson saw him on this place just the evening after father left, and he's been haunting it like a ghost ever since, climbing a tree sometimes to watch us while we are at play. Mammy thinks he's a kidnapper, and trying to get a chance to steal one of us off; but I don't believe that. Papa says it's nonsense to talk of kidnappers painting white children black. He *does* go about the little family burying-ground late at night, though, and sometimes lies down on the graves. They say he digs up the bodies and carries them off to sell, and that is such a shocking thought, that I do think he ought to be driven right off the place immediately."

"Why, it's a great piece of impertinence for him to be intruding upon a gentleman's plantation in this way. He shan't stay long in

these regions, I can tell him; for I'll soon make him take up the line of march; and I wonder the servants haven't done it long ago," said Frank, looking very indignant.

"I said you and Alfred would make him go away when you came with your guns, and I'm delighted you've got back," said George.

"Take care, my dear Frank, what you do to a poor old man and a *stranger*. Nobody *knows* any harm of him; they only suppose he will do these wicked things. I will try and see him myself, and find out all about him," said Mrs. Banks.

"He certainly can't be any thing but an old vagabond. No respectable man would live as he does," said Alfred.

"There is no knowing Mister Alfred what misery hard poverty may drive any one to do, and there is a verse in the Testament which says, 'Judge not that ye be not judged;' and another: 'Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.' Think of that, young gentleman, before you do any thing rash or unkind," replied Mrs. Banks.

"But, Mrs. Banks," said a good many little voices together, "suppose he was to do as mammy says—catch some of us and paint us black and sell us for little slaves."

"Pshaw! children, you mustn't believe every thing you hear. If you are good children, God will take care of you; only see that you keep out of the way of that roaring lion that goes about seeking whom he may devour, and I'm not afraid of old Jerry Thrip getting any of my little flock," answered the old lady with a kind smile. "Miss Fannie," she continued, "do take a little of this good mince, or some of me wegetable mess; it's very wholesome, but you've nothing except a bit of bread and butter."

Fannie bit her lip to suppress her laughter, and, glancing at Alfred and Frank made slyly a wry face at the homely dishes before her as she answered: "Thank you, Mrs. Banks, but I prefer this to any thing you can offer me to-day."

"Ah! then," said the old lady kindly, "may be you'll wait for our farmer's pud

ding. I'm glad we've some dessert for you to-day. We do not often hev sweet things because they injure the stomach. When you and Miss Lizzie hev tasted this pure country air awhile you will not need them, I hope, but will eat as heartily as the rest of me wholesome cooking; then you'll grow fat and rosy like Emmy here—she likes any thing I make."

"Don't you think, madam, that a little sweet huile would improve the flavor of this mess of snaps and apples, as well as make it a more digestible dish?" asked Alfred with a very serious face and bland manner.

"I do not know, Mister Alfred, but a little ham essence might answer better. Will you try some?" answered the old lady quietly.

"No, I thank you, madam," said Alfred still preserving his composure, while Lizzie and Fannie, as well as Frank, were endeavoring to conceal the laughter which they could not suppress, "I was thinking entirely of my sisters when I spoke. My appetite, you see, needs no coaxing, but they, poor things, look

like regular city girls, wan and pale, and they are very apt to fancy just those things which are the very worst for them. I know that mamma will be greatly obliged if you will put them upon some good wholesome diet. Perhaps a tonic might be required first," he suggested, apparently upon sudden thought. Fannie and Lizzie were now half-provoked as well as amused, but they could no longer control themselves when Mrs. Banks, looking at them compassionately, said in answer to Alfred's sage advice:

"*Tonics*, Mister Alfred, I think young persons seldom require, especially in a fine, healthy country like this. Keep the blood pure and let them take plenty of exercise in the open air; *that's* better than any tonics, I can tell you, and I will give them some of me good diet-drink which I've been making to day. It's made of sarsaparilla, molasses, licorice root, a bit of yellow dock, and jest a cup of yeast to make it brisk without any spirit." A burst of hearty laughter broke from both sisters now, as they exclaimed:

"O Alfred! you need physic quite as much as we do, and it's too funny to hear you attempting to prescribe for us. Mrs. Banks, you'll soon find he is altogether wrong about our needing tonics or any thing else."

Alfred's mouth twitched slightly in the corners as he answered: "Well, as to that, I appeal to Mrs. Banks; she sees as well as I, and all the rest do, how pale you both look, how little you eat, and how much, in short, you require *treatment.* And who talks about *physic?* I trust you will neither of you need *that.* Only drink freely of the diet-drink till your blood is purified, and season your food well with ham-hessence hand molasses, then I shouldn't be surprised if you should become as robust as your hearty brother whose only danger is being *entirely* too healthy."

Annie glanced up uneasily towards Mrs. Banks to see if she perceived that the newcomers were turning her into riducule. But with all her sense and judgment, the old lady combined a simple, guileless nature which was entirely free from the slightest suspicion of those whom she had a right to trust; and she

was, besides, so thoroughly convinced herself of the efficacy of her prescriptions and so much interested in seeing them more extensively used, that it never occurred to her that any one could find them subjects of diversion; she enjoyed, therefore, seeing the young people look gay and happy, without troubling herself to find out the cause of their merriment, and, turning benevolently to the two girls said:

"I think your brother is pretty nearly right, dear young ladies, and to-morrow morning I will send you some of me *beer*, as they sometimes call it. It will be quite brisk be that time, I expect."

Frank now thought it was time for him to have his fun as well as Alfred; he accordingly asked, "Don't the Henglish like *brimstone* too, Mrs. Banks?" but, not possessing Alfred's self-control, his own wit quite overcame him so that he was obliged to leave the table in a distressing state of strangling and coughing, produced by the glass of water which he had taken to stop his laughter.

When dinner was over, the young people

went to look out for the other carriage containing the baggage, for Frank had given notice that there were a good many packages in it which had been sent by their parents from Baltimore. Uncle Simon not being yet in sight, they walked down to the gate, where they waited some time. At length the horses' heads were seen as they commenced climbing the last hill, and the boys hallooed to the old man to "*cut up* and make haste home." Annie and Clara were overjoyed at receiving letters from their mothers, written just on the eve of sailing. Mrs. Ludwell's account of herself was quite cheering and she seemed to be looking forward to the voyage with more composure, and even pleasure, than she had ever done before. But Mrs. Lee wrote despondingly of Alice, whom the journey had greatly fatigued; she hoped, however, that sea-air would revive her, and bade Annie place all her trust in the *Great Physician*, and continue her prayers for his merciful aid. Annie read the letter over and over again, first to Tommy and then alone. Tears filled her eyes whenever she came to the tender

lines at the end: "I am never separated in spirit from my absent children, and often close my eyes that fancy may picture to me your faces. At times the sound of little Tommy's pattering feet, and the music of his merry, ringing laugh, echo in my ear with almost painful distinctness—*painful*, because followed so quickly by the realization that it is only an empty sound, bringing no real, little, warm, living form for me to embrace in my eager arms. I bear you both daily on my heart before the Lord; and when at the calm evening twilight hour, I remember your promise to meet me at the throne of grace, I feel, my child, that you are indeed present with me, that I am mocked no longer by a delusive shadow or a cheating sound, but united with you by a bond closer and dearer and more enduring than any earthly tie — sweet fellowship in Christ Jesus our common Lord and Saviour. I need not, I am sure, repeat my charges to watch over your little brother. May you both be securely sheltered beneath the wings of omnipotent love.—Your mother, A. L. L.'

Annie was still sitting by the window in Alice's chair, musing sadly over what her mother had written of her dear sister's continued sufferings, when Clara came running in with her letter open in her hand, looking bright and hopeful. "Isn't it a nice letter, and gives such good news of dear mamma's health, doesn't it?" she said when she had given it to Annie to read.

"It does, indeed, Clara, and I am so glad for you," said Annie, showing by the warm, cordial smile with which she looked up, how truly she rejoiced with her cousin. Her mother constantly impressed upon her the importance of *forgetting herself* when she had an opportunity of sympathizing with another, either in joy or sorrow, and she now made a great effort to lay aside the sad forebodings which made her heart heavy about Alice, as she went on to discuss with Clara some of her aunt's plans.

"But you have not told me about your letter, Annie. I am so sorry that mother did not think Alice improved. I don't think, however, she is ever hopeful about sick

people. Won't you let me see what Aunt Annie says?" said Clara.

Annie sighed, but handed her the letter calmly, and controlled so well her feelings that to one Eye alone were revealed all the anxieties of her young heart.

"I *do* hope it *will* be as Aunt Annie says, that the *voyage* will strengthen dear Alice, although the land travelling has been so trying. But come now, Annie dear, don't sit here any longer by yourself; Mrs. Banks has great parcels of confectionery to divide. Frank says he does not know how it will agree with her conscience to distribute so many sweet things. Poor Frank! he is so distressed at his laughing so rudely to-day! But I don't think Mrs. Banks noticed it."

"She seems too kind and good to think evil of any one; but I wish the Forrests and Frank would not do as they did to-day. It is hard to keep from laughing when they do so; but it is not right to ridicule one whom we have such great reason to love and respect."

"Sister, what do you think?" said George,

coming in with a very disconcerted face, "Mrs. Banks has locked up all the things mother sent, in the storeroom, and just handed round a little plateful of candy—here's all I got," holding up a small piece.

"Well, George, I wouldn't mind about any thing to *eat*, *quite* so much as that. I expect mother told Mrs. Banks to give out a little at a time; at any rate, she *meant* her to do just as she thought proper, and we've got to make the best of it till she comes back, that's all."

It was time now for the sunset-walk to Mistletoe hill, which had become the established custom for every evening. The two older boys looked reluctant to join the party, when informed that prayers were to be said there; but they had been brought up with too much sense of propriety to decline complying with the wishes of Mrs. Banks when she sent to request their attendance. Fannie and Lizzie, too, felt like pleading their long ride as an excuse, but Clara and Annie at last prevailed upon them to go; and there was something so impressive in the fervent simplicity of good Mrs. Banks, as well as in the seeming convic-

tion of the younger children, that God was really present with them, that they soon became interested in the scene and joined heartily in the evening hymn and prayer.

While the little occupants of the grand new nursery were making themselves merry, chasing their own shadows on the wall, and trying mammy's patience in a variety of ways, instead of going "straight to bed," as she continually exhorted them; and Annie Lee was waiting by little Tommy's side, for him to go to sleep under the soothing influence of her long Bible stories; Fannie, Lizzie, and Clara were taking advantage of the mild spring weather to enjoy a moonlight walk on the smooth white gravel below the front terrace. Lizzie, the oldest of the girls, being fourteen her next birthday, was considered on the very verge of young ladyhood, both by herself and her cousins. She was inclined to be quite sentimental and fastidious in her tastes, and disposed to look with contempt on Mrs. Banks's rustic management, though too politely brought up to let it appear in her conduct to the old lady; now, however, that she was

alone with Clara and Fannie, she gave free vent to her feelings.

"Dear me, Clara," she said, "I'm amused at the primitive sort of life we are likely to lead here with '*Mother Banks.*' Our constitutions certainly ought to be invigorated, and our minds are not likely to be injured by undue excitement. Mamma certainly has succeeded in finding a place where our heads wont be turned by society, as she threatened she would. But unless our school exercises brighten us up, I think we are much more likely to grow both healthy and wealthy than *wise.*"

"Oh! you must not judge too quickly, or be too hard to please, Liz," said Clara, laughing. "You've only to get a little accustomed to Mrs. Banks's notions, which I grant you are different, in some respects, from most people's, and I think after a while, you will love her as much, and be as happy as any of us."

"Oh! I think she is a *mighty nice* old lady the broad black band round her cap, and the pretty little plaits in the frills make you feel that she's just as good as good can be; but

then, Clara, Liz and I don't care to get crimped and plaited up until we look just as expressive of calm quiet contentment, as her nice ruffles. We look forward to being city belles, one of these days, in spite of mamma's scruples," said Fannie, with a roguish laugh. She was a bright, sprightly-looking little girl, not so proper or dignified as Lizzie, but very kind-hearted and full of warm generous impulses; and the delight of Alfred's heart, because she always appreciated his wit, and enjoyed his jokes, even when she herself was made the victim of them.

"No danger of that in your case, I'm sure, Fannie; you and Alfred would find some vent for your fun and frolic wherever you might be, but I, on my part, have more to dread from the effects of this quiet dullness," answered Lizzie.

"Well, only keep up a good heart, Liz, and we'll find some way of amusing you. I'll tell the boys to have a horse saddled for you to ride every day; you are fond of horseback, you say, and Mrs. Banks, you know, approves of exercise in the 'hopen

hair,' and then day after to-morrow we begin school," said Clara.

"But only to think, Clara, of how Alfred has served us about the *diet-drink!* To-morrow morning we begin with dose number one, and how many more will follow nobody knows; and the worst of it is, that not a word was said about any of the rest of you drinking it."

"*Only to think what?*" exclaimed Alfred, as he suddenly jumped over the hedge and caught her round the waist; "come with me, my sweetest, and I'll show you something which will make you say, 'only to think,' even more emphatically than that," he continued drawing the girls after him to the end of the walk where the lion stood. Here they found Frank, who was standing before it, with his hands raised, feigning great consternation at the metamorphosis in its appearance.

"What in the world have you been doing to the horse-rack, boys?" asked Clara, surprised to find it of a bright red color.

"What have *we* been doing, Cousin Clara?

Why, that *is* a pretty question. What do you think we could have done to it? Or do you suppose that we *young men* would have played so boyish a trick as to meddle in any way with the good old beast, the king of the forest, who has stood here tamely for so many years?" said Alfred, assuming a theatrical air of insulted dignity.

"You needn't say one word, sir, to the contrary," said Fannie, "for, of course we are not simple enough to be imposed on. We know you did it; but how could you manage it, and where did you get the paint?"

"*Mayhaps* we bled him," said Frank, talking through his nose.

"You might as well tell us at once, for you can't *green* us if you have made the lion red," said Lizzie.

"Only to think! Yes, 'only to think!'
Of this pretty shade of pink,
Coming, we can not tell how—
Suddenly—only just now!
Over our lion pure and white,
And very pleasing to our sight!
Why, my sisters dear,
Did you never hear
Of the common use
Of *bright red pokeberry juice?*"

declaimed Alfred, balancing himself on the lion's back, and flourishing a bottle of juice with which they had just accomplished the wonderful feat.

It had for some time been a favorite amusement with Mr. McLeod's boys to stain any stray animals they could lay their hands on, relishing the joke very highly if it happened to be some one's pet riding-horse or dog; and Alfred seeing this bottle among Frank's store of treasures, had immediately thought of this expedient for astonishing the girls, and perhaps frightening the little children, as he had planned to pass it off for Jerry Thrip's witchcraft. The girls were accordingly bound over to strict secresy, even from Mrs. Banks and Annie, and as they returned towards the house talking and laughing merrily, Fannie and Alfred, who were in front, suddenly stopped and motioned to the others to be still and look in the direction to which they pointed. At some distance off between them and the little family burying-ground, there stood a grove of cedars, and here was seen the form of something gliding

in and out among the trees. Presently it came out more fully in view, and proved to be unquestionably a *man.*

"It is old Jerry Thrip himself, I am sure. How strange that he should appear just as we were talking of him! And it's exactly as the servants say about his hanging round the graveyard at night," said Clara, looking terrified.

"Come, Frank, let's go and see what he's after," said Alfred.

"Oh! no; please don't go alone, boys, and with nothing to defend yourselves," said Lizzie.

"Well, wait a moment, Alfred, and let's take the girls to the house, first, and then I'll get papa's sword-cane. It would be better to have something to frighten the old scamp with," replied Frank. Then as they walked rapidly on, he hurled a large stone in the direction of the grove, saying: "Wait till I come back after you, you impertinent old rascal."

The three girls hurried through the nursery into Mrs. Banks's room, where they

found her seated at a little table with her large Bible so placed that the light of the lamp fell directly down upon its pages. Her spectacles were lying in the open book, and her head bowed over it was resting on her hands. Evidently she was meditating upon some passage which she had been reading, and an expression of serene happiness was in her thoughtful countenance as she looked up to answer Clara's call.

"We have had another fright, Mrs. Banks, with that horrid old creature!" she exclaimed, looking very much vexed.

"I am very sorry to hear it. How did it happen, my dear, this time?"

Clara gave an account of Jerry's sudden appearance, and supernatural manner of gliding about, setting off the terrors of the occasion in the highest colors; but Mrs. Banks only smiled and said:

"Why, it seems to me, Clara, you are all of you very easily frightened. The poor old man was far off from you, and only walking quietly through the place. The servants have excited your fears by their foolish sto-

ries, which you ought to have too much good sense to believe. I have asked a great many questions, and can not hear of his ever doing any harm, while on the other hand they tell of many hardships he has been made to bear on account, I believe, only of his ill-looks, which seems not exactly fair. Stop, boys! Mister Alfred and Mister Frank, stop if you please!" she called, seeing the boys with a lantern and cane passing through the hall to the front-door.

"I do not wish you to go after the old man to-night, for you may be tempted to do something which you will regret. As long as he stays off at a distance from every one, why should you care to molest him? I think you had much better try to find some way of doing him good. The poor old creature may not have his right senses about him, and surely it seems hard for the hand of man to be turned against one whom the Almighty has so sorely afflicted. Our Heavenly Father has been very good and merciful to each one of us, and you must remember that he is Lord of *all*, and that to whom he has

given much, of them will he require the more."

The boys were not unwilling to be stopped in their pursuit of Jerry by the uncertain moonlight, near the lonely graveyard, and therefore readily yielded to Mrs. Banks's argument; she arranged a bright cheerful light for them in the dining-room, and brought out the chess-board and several puzzles and games for their amusement, until bed-time, when even Lizzie pronounced herself pleased with the evening's entertainment.

CHAPTER IX.

"YOUNG ladies! Miss Clara and Miss Annie, an' all the little children is most dressed, ready for their walk. You'll be entirely too late ef you don't jump right up now an' hurry wid your dressin'," said Marion as she returned for the third time to try and waken Fannie and Lizzie, as at the dawn of a sweet, spring morning, Mrs. Banks was collecting her young charge to accompany her to a beautiful arbor in front of the house, covered with the delicate champney rose, jasmine, and virgin's bower. Although the creepers were just beginning to bud, it was a sweet spot, and as it looked towards the east, had been chosen by the old lady as a suitable retreat for their morning devotions.

"Why, Marion! who ever heard of people's getting up this time of day? I'm not

used to it, and really can not do it," said Lizzie throwing herself back on her pillow, after sitting up for a few minutes, and rubbing her eyes; while Fannie only noticed the summons by drawing the sheet over her face. So Marion smiled, and turned to report her want of success to Mrs. Banks, who shook her head disapprovingly. Nor was Jackson more happy in his efforts to rouse Frank and Alfred.

Accordingly, when Clara, Annie, and Tommy had come down, neatly dressed, and looking fresh and rosy, leaving the sluggards to enjoy their slumbers; the rest, forming a happy animated group, followed their venerable guide. Clara took Emmy's hand, and Annie, Tommy's, and carrying Mrs. Banks large Bible, they walked in front; while Harry and George, Susy and Alice, followed clustering together, talking very fast, and often all at once, stopping now and then, to hunt for pretty pebbles in the gravel, or look at a flower that was peeping up its head above the ground. Notwithstanding

these little detentions, they kept ahead of Mrs. Banks, little Phebe, and Master Charlie.

Before these last reached the arbor, Annie and Clara had drawn out the rustic arm-chair and placed the well-used old Bible, with its many markers, on the little round table; then when she entered, the children took their accustomed places, and just as the rising sun began to gild the wide-spread landscape, turning their faces eastward, they sang Dr. Watts's little hymn:

"My God who makes the sun to know
His proper hour to rise,
And to give light to all below
Doth send him round the skies."

Mrs. Banks then read the nineteenth Psalm, and offered up a short, simple prayer, every word of which the children understood. When she had finished she said:

"Now, dear children, we have just thanked our Father who lives above, and whose dwelling-place is far brighter than the glory of the sun, for all his mercies to us last night; and we have asked him to forgive our sins and

take away our naughty tempers and evil thoughts, as well as to give us food for our souls and bodies, and to keep us safely all the day. Remember, now, that He has *promised* to hear us when we pray in Jesus' name, and therefore, as he is too good to lie, we may be *sure* that if we earnestly desire what we have prayed for, he will not fail to do all that we asked of him; and oh! how much you have already received at his hands! Will you not then, in all your pleasures, whether great or small, try to remember who makes your hearts glad, and be thankful? And when Satan tempts you to do sinful things, will you not also look *above* from whence come all your blessings, and thinking of that Eye which sees your inmost thoughts, ask yourselves: Shall I by my wicked conduct grieve that holy Saviour who loves me, and is always doing me good? Another thing I want you to remember is, that when God gives us an abundance of those things which all his creatures need, as well as we, he means us to share these mercies with others, thus giving us the very

highest of all pleasures, the power to do good and to confer happiness, which is his constant delight. If you choose you may enjoy something of this kind this morning, I grant you, only in a small way; but you can hardly know how much happiness may often be caused by very little trifling matters, or, on the contrary, how much sorrow. By making a right use now of your childish stores, you will be learning, too, how to act when more important things are intrusted to your keeping. When you hear the bell ring, all of you come under the window of the large front chamber and look down on the grass. Perhaps you will find something which will please you very much. Look *down* to receive, you know, but don't forget to *look up* to be thankful!" she added with an arch smile, and then left them.

In about ten minutes the bell rung out its invitation, and eagerly the little feet scampered to gain the appointed spot, each one of them, except Annie and Clara, trying to be first. Obedient'y to Mrs. Banks's directions they kept their eyes on the ground, at first

rather disappointed to find *nothing* there. Presently, however, a rustling sound was heard, and then a great paper bag was lowered from the window above. Having nearly reached the ground, it was suddenly turned bottom upwards, showering in their midst a great supply of confectionery, books and toys, suitable to all their various tastes and ages, besides a package of bright colored handkerchiefs, scarfs, and gloves for the servants.

The long, loud, merry laugh which ensued pierced even the drowsy ears of the four sluggards and made them start up to inquire what had happened. The emptying of the bag was followed by a general scramble and the eager exclamations:

"Where did it come from?" said Charlie.

"Above! *don't you know?*" said Alice.

"And we must be *thankful!*" said little Emmy.

"Oh! I know mamma sent them to us," said Henry.

"Yes, and Mrs. Banks dropped the bag

down!" said George who had taken a sly peep while it was coming.

"Yes, you are right in all your guesses about the bag, my dear children," said Mrs. Banks, who now appeared at the window, with a face radiant with smiles. "But still it came from *above*, did it not? for it was God who gave you kind parents, who love you so much that they are thinking of, and trying to please you whether absent or present; and He has made them able to gratify so many of your wishes; but I wonder if you can not find some poor children who are not so happily circumstanced with whom you may share your *abundance?*"

Breakfast was on the table by this time, but very few had any relish for it, so excited were they in discussing what disposition they should make of the contents of the bag, and whether "*lazy bones*" should participate in the enjoyment.

"I think," said Clara, "a good way would be to set out a long table under Mistletoe Hill, because it's nice and shady there,

and invite them to come to the feast and give them the first choice, to make them ashamed."

"*That* wouldn't make them *ashamed*, sister!" said George. "They'd be glad they were lazy, because they get the best by it."

"Let me finish, Georgie, and you'll see that they don't get the *best*, because they won't have the pleasure of *giving*—they will only *receive* from us. After they have what they want, we will give some to those poor little children at the mill, who have such a cross grandmother, and, I expect, never had such a treat as this—there'll be enough for them and the servants afterwards."

Mrs. Banks and Annie were delighted with this plan, and most of the children readily agreed; but George and one or two of the younger ones could not exactly enjoy the idea of giving to *so many* before their turn came; accordingly, it was arranged that they should be helped with the first, and only they who were perfectly willing should wait. Henry was very eager to carry out this plan, so he and Susy were dispatched to the mill

to have the children dressed and in place by the time they were wanted. George and Alice were sent on the same errand to the quarters. Tommy and Emmy staid, to wait on Clara and Annie, who were busy arranging the table; and Mrs. Banks took Charlie and little Phebe into the garden with her, to help her, as told them, to give directions about working up the beds.

When they were looking over the things Clara and Annie found a package directed to each of them. Clara's was a pasteboard box, containing a very fine, muslin cap, made just like those which Mrs. Banks wore. Annie's was a collection of new hymns in a handsome binding and very large print, marked: "For Annie to do as she pleases with."

"I know what mamma thought I would *please* to do with it, too," said Annie looking very much pleased, as Clara was also with her cap, both of which were immediately labelled with Mrs. Banks's name.

Meanwhile, the "*lazy bones*" having only risen as the rest were going to breakfast, did

not get down until they were dispersed on their different errands, having first given all the servants strict charges not to tell where they were.

Just as Lizzie and Fannie were finishing their toilet, Marion entered their room, with a waiter in her hand containing two mugs of beer which she said Mrs. Banks wished them to drink before breakfast.

"Dear me! what's to be done?" said Lizzie, looking at it with a face expressing any thing but pleasure. "I wonder how the stuff tastes? suppose you try it, Fan, and give me the benefit of your experience."

"No, I thank you, sister; for *I* haven't the least *curiosity* about it."

"What shall we do with it, Marion?" asked Lizzie, "for you see drinking it is out of the question."

"I don't know, Miss," said Marion demurely; "Mistus lef' word for every body to mine Mrs. Banks; *she* tell me to bring the beer up for you and Miss Fannie. Miss Clara and Miss Annie always does jes' as she axs them."

"I know they do, but *we* an't *half* as good. I've a great mind to throw mine out of the window. I wish Alfred had it *this minute*, and was obliged to drink it—however, I'll take it this time, I believe, and if it's very bad I won't any more." So saying, Lizzie swallowed hers, laughed afterwards, and made a little face as she put the mug down.

"Did Mrs. Banks send any of this to Master Alfred and Frank?" asked Fannie turning with a very amused look to Marion.

"Not as I knows of, Miss," she returned.

"Well, set the waiter down, Marion, and you can go."

As soon as she had gone, Fannie took up the beer and with a mischievous glance towards Lizzie, left the room and went down stairs. When she entered the breakfast-room she found Jackson standing, grimly waving his fly-brush over the table which had been cleared off once, and set over again. His face brightened as she entered, and the chances seemed improved for his being soon

relieved from his solitary and tedious employment.

"Here, Jackson! take this up to Master Alfred and tell him that Mrs. Banks would like to know whether he thinks it will suit his sisters; he must drink it all and give her his opinion," she said, handing the waiter to the servant.

Jackson, with all gravity, did as he was told, without any suspicion that he was carrying a fictitious message.

"Botheration she does! I didn't expect to be caught in this way, but I suppose I must drink it to satisfy the old lady, or I might get into an awkward fix if she should question me. I must not let Fannie and Liz know it, though. Paugh! it's a dose," he said, returning the empty mug to Jackson's waiter. "Come, Frank, let's go and get our breakfast, for I'm impatient for something to eat after my *tonic*."

"It serves you just right, Alfred; you'd have been too much elated if you had carried things your way, and gotten the better of the girls so completely."

They followed Jackson to the breakfast-room, and Fannie gave an inquiring, quizzical look towards the empty waiter as they entered, then turning her back, walked towards the window and looked out to conceal her laughter. Lizzie came down the next moment and instantly commenced an attack on Alfred, saying:

"Well, Master Solomon; I hope you are satisfied as we've had our *purifying* drink."

"Have you, indeed? And girls, honestly *didn't* you like it?"

"It's not so very bad as I expected, *to the taste;* but it seems so nonsensical to be drinking such stuff, when you are perfectly well, too," said Lizzie.

"How is it with you, little Fan; don't you approve of drinking it?"

"Vastly, sir; especially when my brother Alfred drinks my share for me," she answered triumphantly.

"Oh! ho! you little mischief! I was just beginning to suspect something," said Alfred, laughing heartily as well as the rest. "Very well! if I don't pay you for it; and

how shocked Mrs. Banks will be to hear you were guilty of a *fabrication*—that you *used her name falsely!* It's more than I would have done!"

"Ah! Alfred! it was only a *quiz*," said Fannie earnestly.

"Quiz! I would have some respect for the truth, at any rate, miss, when I undertook to quiz."

"So I do, and you know that I did not say any thing more than you would do in *jest*."

"I know that you keep at a *respectful distance* from the truth—perhaps you have such veneration for it that you don't like to be *familiar*," replied Alfred, chuckling with delight to find that Fannie was really a little teased.

"I wonder where every body is!" said Lizzie, trying kindly to change the subject.

"I think Clara and Annie might have looked in on us before they went out of sight and hearing," said Fannie.

"I expect they were too much shocked at our laziness to think of such a thing," re-

plied Lizzie. "The fact is, Clara is growing decidedly conscientious."

"I thought we should have heard something about the *red* lion the first thing," said Frank. "Which way did they all go, Jackson?"

"I think they'se not all of 'em gone one way, Mas Frank; Mrs. Banks, *she* took Mas Charlie and Miss Phebe to the vegtable garden, and I hearn Mas Harry say how he was gwine to the mill with Miss Susy; but they'se all gone somewheres," answered Jackson with a grin of satisfaction at his own adroitness in keeping the secret.

"What a nice time the children seemed to be having this morning," said Fannie. "I heard such merry shouts of laughter just as I waked, that I wished I was with them, instead of having been so lazy."

"It's not *eight* o'clock yet. I don't call it lazy to be ready for breakfast by this time," said Alfred.

When they left the breakfast-room they sauntered round the house in the bright warm sunshine, chatting together and trying to spy

out their playmates until Tommy and Emmy appeared running towards them, eager and breathless. When they were near enough to deliver their message, Emmy stood a little back while Tommy, advancing made a low bow and said:

"Ladies and gentlemans, the pleasure of your company is wequested on Mistletoe Hill, as soon as you can come, to a feast."

"A feast, hey! why that's what they've been so busy about then; I wonder whose notion it was?" said Frank. And off they all started in high good humor to obey the summons.

The table was beautifully set, adorned with evergreens and flowers from the greenhouse. Clara stood at the head, and Annie at the foot, each with a waiter under her arm. Harry and Susy, Tommy and Alice were stationed opposite to each other at a little distance from the table, wearing badges like Clara's and Annie's, to show that they also were to serve the company. But George, Charlie, Emma, and Phebe had places appointed them among the guests, and a large

arm-chair was placed for Mrs. Banks under a neighboring tree where she could see all that passed. The six little motherless children from the mill were seated on some rocks, bare-headed and without shoes or stockings; but with their faces washed, and dressed in clean though coarse blue cotton frocks. And beyond these were squads of little negro children, while here and there a gray-headed old servant stood leaning on the head of a cane, watching the proceedings with solemn interest.

Clara advanced to meet the new-comers with a bright mischievous smile as she bade them welcome to the feast, "given in honor of the '*lazy bones*' who preferred their morning nap to a sweet walk in the spring of the year, and didn't mind missing family prayers when the rest were all ready. Do be seated," she added quickly with affected concern, pointing to some large rocks arranged for the purpose. "We are afraid you'll be dreadfully tired after the exertions you've made."

"You think you'll put us to the blush, I

see, Cousin Clara, by your ironical politeness; but I dare say we are philosophical enough to stand it and enjoy your good things, too, knowing what extreme pleasure you must take in waiting so generously on us," said Alfred. "Come, friends, let's take our seats and make merry," he added, turning to the two girls and Frank.

When they had amused themselves, keeping their entertainers as long as possible waiting, and threatening to demolish all that was before them, they at length arose, pronouncing themselves delighted with their entertainment. They were invited then, to wait and *see* the end, Annie saying, "*Our* best time is coming *now*," as she called up the little poor children and filled their hands with cakes and confectionery, smiling to see how pleased they looked, and how new to them many of the little toys were. Mrs. Banks called them round her before they went home, and cautioned them to save something for another day, lest they should be made sick; then she talked to them about the Saviour, trying to make them realize his

love to them and his interest in all their joys or sorrows. It was a happy day for the little creatures, and their cheerful voices could be heard as they tramped off through the woods, laden with their treasures.

The servants were afterwards called, and each received a nice present—their hearty "thank ye, Mistus, thank ye Master," testifying their gratification and pleasure.

Mrs. Banks looked surprised and pleased at the pretty presents which she received from Clara and Annie. And when the feast was at an end, the young *givers* all felt that they had realized fully the enjoyment they had anticipated.

"Oh! look! What's that?" said little Alice as, on their way home, they came in sight of the painted lion, having been perposely led that way by the older boys and girls.

"What is it, sure enough?" said George, walking forward to get a better view. "Why, it's the lion, some body's gone and painted *red;* who could have done it?"

"Who in the world *could?*" said Frank, pretending equal surprise.

"Why, it is very strange!" said Alfred. "Look Cousin Clara, what a curious red color it is too; here are some places where the white shows through. It's very strange; could the servants have done it?"

"No!" said Clara; "I am sure none of them would ever have thought of taking such a liberty."

"That part looks as bright as old Jerry's coat when we saw him last night in the distance," said Frank.

"Did you see him, Frank? Then I be *bound* it was him that did this," said Harry; "he just wanted to frighten us. What did you say to him, Frank?"

"Nothing; he wasn't *very* near, and Mrs. Banks was so opposed to our going after him that Alfred and I gave it up; but this shows he CAN *paint*, and if it had been a little child, may be he'd have made it *black* instead of *red.*"

"Or *may be,*" said Alfred stretching his

eyes with assumed amazement and fright; "he's an old Ogre that can turn himself into *any thing* he chooses, and he has turned into the old lion, and that's his red jacket. I expect we had better be making our home before he eats some of us up."

At this, some of the *little* ones without a word, scampered off into the house to tell Mrs. Banks their fears. Alfred and Frank turned then to *Tommy*, saying: "And why don't you run, too, sir?"

"I'll wait for my sister Annie," he answered.

"But suppose the old Ogre was to eat you up while you are waiting."

"Sister Annie won't let him do it."

"How can she help it, may be he'll eat her up first."

"No, he'll never hurt her, tause God tan teep him from it."

"But how do you know that God will care whether he hurts *either* of you or not?"

"Umph, I know *that* well enoug out of the Bible· why even the *wittle birds*, he

knows about and takes tare of. Mamma read it to me herself."

"Look here, Alfred! I believe you and Frank did that yourselves and are just trying to frighten us all," said Henry; "but George and I have found you out."

"Very well, if you choose to think so you are welcome, I only hope you will take care to keep out of the kidnapper's way, as I wouldn't like you to be sold off to Georgia, that's all; and we can't run the risk of standing here to take care of you, so let's go in, Frank."

Mrs. Banks had some trouble in soothing the fright of Susy, Alice, Emmy, and Charlie; she assured them there were no such things in the world as Ogres, that the boys were only trying to frighten them for their own amusement, and offered to take them herself, and show how easily the old lion could be washed white again. Frank and Alfred were very much amused and delighted when they saw her going out with a basin of water and a sponge, and the children following her, to

perform this operation. They called Fannie and Lizzie to see them from the window, saying: "Well, it has given the old lady something to do at any rate, and the children something to talk about, and we'll slip out as soon as they come in, and stain it over again."

CHAPTER X.

WHEN the spring was sufficiently advanced for such work, the children asked Mrs. Banks to let them each have a flower-bed of their own to cultivate; to which she very gladly consented, and uncle Lemuel was accordingly instructed to lay off their different parterres, and get the soil in readiness. Clara had for some time had quite a large garden appropriated to her, which she offered to divide with Annie and Tommy; and the rest had places allotted them very near the house.

Good Mrs. Banks took a lively interest in watching their operations, very much pleased at finding that the inducement to secure time to work before the hour for school was sufficient to entice even Fannie and Lizzie out much earlier than they had been in the habit of rising; they were down now as punctually as any of the rest, and labored assiduously at their tasks.

In the evening the watering-pots were in great demand, and the plants were carefully examined, for the purpose of noting and comparing their growth. Lizzie was soon so absorbed in the interest of her work, that she entirely forgot the dread she had once felt of the *quiet dullness* and seclusion of their life at Belmont under Mrs. Banks's government. Frank and Alfred laughingly begged to be excused from taking part in this early morning work; but promised to render assistance occasionally to the *elder* girls.

One morning Mrs. Banks had been walking round with her knitting in her hand and her little key-basket on her arm, smiling at the bright, happy, busy-looking faces before her, when she paused and said:

"Children, I wonder if any *one* of you thinks, while at work, of those other little gardens which the *Great Gardener* has given us to cultivate? I mean our hearts, and the Christian graces which we manifest in our lives are the flowers. The Holy Spirit will help us to cultivate them, and our heavenly Father and the holy angels will delight in our

success. The Bible furnishes us with plenty of precious seed, which must be carefully sown, while we earnestly pray that they may be watered with the dew of God's blessing; then we shall certainly find our pains abundantly rewarded. *These* sweet flowers will never fade; but bloom in heaven more beautifully than our greatest efforts could ever make them do in earthly soil. Take, for instance, such seed as this: 'Walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us and hath given himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savor.' Sow it in the way I have told you, prayerfully in your heart, and there will spring up a plant of priceless value; the bloom is pure white, being wholly unsullied by those dark, ugly spots which are seen in the coarse, noxious weeds, anger, wrath, malice, and hatred, which spring up from seed which Satan is constantly trying to sow in our hearts; but we must try to have so much of this sweet white flower *love* as to leave no room for *them*. On one side of *love*, and very close to it, is a fine place for joy—this is the seed of it:

'Rejoice in the Lord *always*; and again I say, rejoice.' Its bloom is bright scarlet, and it not only looks up to be glad in the Lord, but like the scarlet verbena, which brightens with its cheerful hue even the low, yellow earth, so it can stoop to bring gladness to the hearts of the lowly and the destitute; for this reason it keeps close to love, for poor indeed is the joy of the heart where love does not abound! 'Live in peace, and the God of love and peace shall be with you,' will produce on the other side of love, a little unobtrusive plant, which steals up silently and spreads itself all around. The little blue-eyed forget-me-not, or the sweet blue violet, are fit emblems of it, or perhaps even better, the calm blue sky on a summer's evening. Another flower very highly prized in heaven and most difficult of culture here, requiring a spiritual mind even to appreciate its beauty, is *long-suffering*: 'With long-suffering, forbearing one another in love.' How perfectly, dear children, this was exemplified in the life of Him of whom we read: He is despised, and we esteemed him not; surely he hath

borne our griefs and carried our sorrows. Yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.' Let us keep our eyes steadfastly fixed upon him, and wrap the tendrils of our *love* more and more closely around his cross, if we hope to make *this* flourish in such ungenial soil as our proud and stubborn hearts; should our culture prosper, it will spring up tall and straight, too strong to be easily injured itself, and shielding more tender and delicate blossoms. I fear, however, you will think I choose for this a homely emblem—the *sun-flower*. Yet you know I told you that *long-suffering* was not a showy plant. The sun-flower looks upwards, however, to the source of light, and is encircled by a crown which might seem the reflection of his beams. And last but not least, my dears, we must not forget to be always trying to 'grow in grace.' If grace be wanting, vainly will you labor over the others. There will certainly be some great deficiency about the little gardens you are trying to make 'hallowed ground,' betokening their final ruin, though they may seem fair and flourishing

for a time. *Grace* we may imagine either as a plant distilling from its leaves a gentle and nourishing dew, or like a tender vine creeping under the branches of more hardy and common flowers, and imparting to them some secret charm which heightens either their beauty or fragrance. Mignionette is a very imperfect type of this heavenly flower; still, we may, I think, trace some points of resemblance. Like *grace*, it has a sort of indescribable bloom, yet there is an exquisitely-refined beauty in its fresh, light green leaves, and its delicate, shrinking, bending form; but especially in its all-pervading and delicious sweetness; sometimes, you know, a few sprigs placed with other flowers which have no recommendation but their showy appearance, will impart so much perfume, that at first we take the fragrance for their own; so grace renders attractive the *natural* qualities of the heart and mind, and gives them a value which they could not otherwise possess.

"What flower must I plant, sister, in that wittle darden Mrs. Banks told us about?" whispered Tommy, whose large eyes had

been fixed on the old lady as she was speaking.

"Which do you choose for yourself, dear little brother?"

"The *white* one, sister Annie, tause den I tan send some of it to mother and sister Allie," he answered with a bright, bewitching smile, adding quickly, and throwing at the same time his arms round Annie's neck, and pressing his soft cheek against hers:

"I'd save *some* for my sister Annie though."

Annie lovingly buried her hand in the rich clusters of shining ringlets which covered his head, and drawing it back, looked fondly in his face, then kissed his red lips and said:

"Mrs. Banks told us we had each *two* gardens, my darling little brother; but I believe *I* have *three*. Here I kiss this marble forehead for my *love*, these bright red lips for my *joy*, and the deep blue of these sweet eyes I take for my *peace;* while here is *love* again in the clear white around my *peace;* for long-suffering these bright golden ringlets must do—yes, at the top of all they point upwards and borrow glory from the sun. Why, it's

the very thing! For *grace* the whole dear little body must answer. What do you say to being my third little garden, full of pretty flowers, blooming all together?"

"Will you be mine, too, then, sister Annie, if I'm yours?"

"Ah! Tommy, I would directly, if you could only find the flowers about my head and face; but you can't! My eyes are black, and my hair too, and my skin is not as white as *love* should be, so there would be three missing flowers."

"I am so sorry," said Tommy, looking disconcerted.

"Oh! never mind, dear," said Annie, "just let me help you to take care of your *two* little gardens, and I am sure you'll find enough beautiful flowers in these without the third one."

From the nursery windows there was a pretty view of the children's garden, and here sometimes Mrs. Banks would take her seat, knitting briskly on little Phebe's stocking, glancing from time to time at the busy little

gardeners, questioning them about their work, and helping them with her advice

"Clara," said Annie, the evening after the conversation about their *spiritual* gardens, "suppose that we begin this very evening to plant some flowers in our beds to correspond to Mrs. Banks's *spiritual plants.* Tommy and I choose Love for our first one."

"Very well; and what white flower shall we take for its emblem?" answered Clara.

"There are so many beautiful ones; I can't tell which would suit best; suppose we ask Mrs. Banks?"

"I saw some beautiful Calla lilies in bloom this morning," answered Mrs. Banks, "and as I looked at the pure white as well as the soft velvet-like cup, bent *downwards*, as if to pour out its golden treasure, I thought it would answer well as an emblem of that charity which seeketh not her own."

"Oh! yes," said Annie, "it is so *purely* white, and its broad, green leaves spread out so protectingly too."

"Don't you think Uncle Lemuel will let us have one or two of his, Clara?"

"Yes; I will tell him that we want them," answered Clara very confidently.

"And you will not forget, my dears, to select a sweet text for each emblematic flower which you may call either its seed or its motto, only be sure you try to think of it whenever you see the plant to which it belongs. I dare say you will each find verses to suit yourselves better than the ones I mentioned," said faithful Mrs. Banks.

"And then, when we all get different mottoes, we will have such a nice collection of texts about these pretty plants," said Annie with great animation.

"Of course we must not choose the same flowers as emblems either, then," said Lizzie, "as a little variety will be wanted in our gardens."

"We will have different ones when we can; but each must take a sun-flower for *long-suffering*, I suppose, and the sweet mignionette we can't have too much of. We will repeat our texts to Mrs. Banks, and let her tell us which has chosen the prettiest ones," said Clara.

"One motto we will make *our word*, for all that day, trying to think of it as much as we can, and taking some other for the next day, till we have had them all, then begin over again," said Annie.

"That is a very good plan, my dear Annie, and I will tell you another good result that will come of your thus associating these texts with your pleasant hours together. Hereafter, when you are all scattered, as probably you will be, for time brings many changes into every household, don't you think when in reading your Bibles you come across these same verses, they will affect you more strongly as well as more pleasantly because they recall to mind a dear young companion who loved it very much, and used to make it her *word* for the day?" said Mrs. Banks.

"Yes," said Clara, "and then we shall never forget each other as long as we read our Bibles. I know who will be remembered, besides, and who we will love and thank for many, many happy hours, too," she added, smiling knowingly at her old friend.

Uncle Lemuel was moving his plants into the open air, and had many very pretty ones to spare; he was, however, a very self-important personage, and often took the liberty, as an old family servant, of speaking his mind very plainly to his young masters and mistresses, and doing in a grum, surly manner what he really enjoyed being called on to do; so, in the present instance, though he felt a great deal of interest in their little gardens, he thought it quite beneath his dignity to manifest this feeling too warmly, and received the children in a manner which was exactly in keeping with Frank's soubriquet for him, namely, Rusty Crusty Fusty Old Fudge.

"Umph! an' what all dis mighty crowd 'bout now, I wonder? Uncle Lemuel! uncle Lemuel! uncle Lemuel! jis like uncle Lemuel had a hunded pair ears and a hunded tongues at your sarvice," he exclaimed, as they all came eagerly around him to petition for the plants they wanted.

His manner, however, soon softened towards "Miss Clara," as she, not noticing his salutation, said, with a little quiet air of au-

thority which she had acquired whilst acting as mamma's proxy so often during the past year:

"Uncle Lemuel, I want you to find us all the different flowers we ask you for, and tell us the best way of raising them. We shall not injure your collection, but rather improve it; so you needn't make any objection.

"Annie has chosen the Calla lily; now, Lizzie, you must take your choice next," she continued, turning to her cousin.

Lizzie said: "I will take the white Azalia, Clara, if you will let me; it has always been my favorite white flower."

"And I choose the Cape Jasmine," said Fannie.

"I will take a Day lily, then, for myself,' said Clara. "Uncle Lemuel, you can get me a good root from the one mamma had last year, can't you?"

"Dare say I kin, Miss Clara."

"I mean to do like *Beauty*. Choose a sweet white rose; and may be Uncle Lemuel will turn a good-natured, kind beast, and give

me a great many pretty things besides," said Susy.

Uncle Lemuel was quite gratified at this acknowledgment of his power; his mouth almost relaxed into a broad grin as he replied:

"I wisht I knowed whar the *putty things* comin from, den, Miss Susy; but to be sure I'se as willin' as ever to do the best I kin for all o' you, only please all heb good *marners*, and wait till the proper time come for each to be sarved."

Alice chose a white camelia, and George a pœnia. Henry said he would leave Susy the white *teas*, and take a white daily rose. Emmy asked Mrs. Banks to choose her a flower, and she selected the sweet-scented candytuft; while for Charlie she took a white oleander. Uncle Lemuel could not forbear giving a little contemptuous shrug, and saying: "'Spose you all 'spects these flowers to be in bloom all at de same time, does you? Not minding if more 'an half of 'em is out of date now, and won't come round agin fore

middle of de summer. There's Miss Clara's day lily an't gwine to bloom fore August, for *one*."

"Oh! never mind that, uncle Rusty Crusty, we don't care to be in bloom all at once; but stop! Alf and I must choose a white flower, too, and get one of our pet cousins to make it grow for us. I shall take Uncle Lemuel's white carnation he's so proud of; and Cousin Fan shall plant it in her flower-bed," said Frank.

"Taken in that amiable and humble spirit, of course, you won't be at a loss for a *Scripture* motto for it," said Fannie, with playful irony.

"It's the very apple of your eye, Uncle Lemuel, an't it, being something new? I'm afraid I'll not get it by very fair measures, either; but I must teach the old gentleman that the end sanctifies the means," Frank replied laughingly.

"For my part," said Alfred, glancing mischievously at Annie, "I should *like* to choose the *Noisette Lee* for my *love*, and let Cousin Annie take care of it for me; but I'm afraid

there's too much of the *blush* in its pretty face to make it as spiritual a plant as it ought to be; although I must confess, *I* like it all the better for that *little tinge*."

The girls all laughed heartily, and looked to see how Annie would receive this playful sally; she only smiled slightly, and tried to change the subject. Mrs. Banks looked very grave indeed, not relishing any approach to a jest when sacred things were alluded to.

"There is a white verbena, Mister Alfred, which may be you'd like," she said rather dryly.

"Thank you, madam, I've no doubt it will do as well as any thing," he answered laughing.

Having satisfied themselves with their first emblematic flowers, they now retreated to the house to choose mottoes. Annie, after thinking for some time, concluded that Tommy and herself would take the 13th of 1 Cor., and already her fancy pictured her mother's pleasure when Tommy should repeat it to her for the first time.

CHAPTER XI.

"GUDE mornin', bonnie ladie!" said a hollow, cracked voice one morning to Annie Lee, who was stooping down very low, near her little flower-bed, in search of her lost thimble, which she had just dropped from her pocket. Greatly startled at this unexpected sound, the little girl sprang up quickly, and looking round beheld Jerry Thrip standing close beside her. Annie was naturally very timid, and had always led a quiet, sheltered sort of life, leaning for direction in every thing upon her mother. When she found herself, therefore, entirely alone with this wretched-looking being, so long an object of terror to herself and her young companions, she was for a moment exceedingly frightened and at a loss what to do. Her first impulse was to run, but there was something in the poor creature's appearance

which awakened her compassion, and while she stood hesitating whether to go or stay, he took off his tattered cap, and bowing respectfully, repeated his salutation: "Gude mornin', bonnie maid," adding very humbly:

"Wad ye forgie a puir sick auld mon for passin' sae near ye? I thocht, maybae it wad na' disturb ony at this tome o' the day."

This speech moved Annie very much, and at the same moment her eye rested on her beautiful Calla lily, reminding her of its sweet signification, "Love suffereth long and is *kind*." She involuntarily repeated to herself, then quickly stopping Jerry as he was about to pass on without waiting for an answer, she said with a soft kind voice and manner:

"Good morning, poor Jerry, you don't disturb me at all. Have you walked far this morning?"

"I've na' camed sae lang away *yet*, ladie, but was ganging to the toon, and *that* is far frae me, travellin' roun' the big road, sae I just tak'd the path through."

"Where do you live?" asked Annie.

"It's a puir place eneugh, ladie, being na' but a small hovel in the woods, beyont yer fither's gate some mile or mair."

"Are you all alone there, and didn't you say you were sick?"

A great tear rolled down old Jerry's sunken cheek; then brushing it off with the back of his hand, he fixed his eyes so wildly on Annie for a few moments, that she was terrified until he dropped them again upon the ground, and murmured in answer to the latter part of her question:

"Sae sick I had na' thocht to use these auld limbs ony mair; but their's na tellin' the great Maister's mind. He's mad' me to bide yet, so ther's mair to be *suffered* afore it's a' doone."

"If you will come with me up to the house, I'll call Mrs. Banks to see you. She will be glad to give you a good breakfast before you go any farther, and maybe she could cure you too, as she's a good doctor," said Annie.

"Mony, mony thanks to ye, gude canny

ladie, but I maun frighten the weans wi' me scareful face."

"No one will be frightened if they see you come with me. It was only because you were such a stranger, and we did not know why you came that we were scared," answered Annie, blushing very much at the latter part of her reply as she remembered how much alarm she had once felt, and shown, too, at the sight of him.

Jerry still hesitated, but Annie insisted, and he presently yielded.

Frank and Alfred were standing in the portico, cleaning their guns, when, followed by her humble attendant, she ascended the terrace and came in sight.

"Only to see *that!*" exclaimed Frank, pointing towards her; "that's personifying *Charity*, I think; keeping company with an old vagrant. What can she be going to do with him, I wonder?"

"I don't know," answered Alfred, "but that's what I call real goodness in Cousin Annie, for she was as much afraid of him as any body, until Mrs. Banks said something

about his being poor and miserable, and it being every body's duty to relieve suffering wherever they met with it. I noticed her great black eyes getting larger and softer and darker as she was listening to her the very last time the old lady talked to the children. She made me feel quite ashamed of my own hard-heartedness, and it isn't every little girl, I can tell you, who would bear to be laughed at for her kindness as Annie must know she is very certain to be by us *bad* boys."

"Pshaw! Annie just likes to set herself up for a pattern to every body else; she's got a way of imitating Aunt Annie since *she* went away."

"I don't see how she sets herself up at all, Frank. I'm sure she's always the first to find some excuse for any one of us that gets into a scrape, and when she can't join in our wild pranks only slips quietly out of the way or says in the gentlest manner in the world: "I think I'd rather not." Depend upon it, Frank, our little cousin is trying to

do right all the time, and not thinking of making any show about it."

"Umph! I don't see the use of your defending Annie so warmly. I didn't mean what I said in sober earnest, though I really think she needn't be bringing that old beggar up to the door and spoiling our fun with the children," said Frank.

Tommy had been watching at the window for his sister, and as soon as he saw her coming, ran down to meet her, feeling such confidence in her protection, that even old Jerry could not frighten him so long as *she* did not seem afraid of him.

"How dy do, Jerwy," he said promptly, extending his little hand, and looking up with perfect assurance into his face. Jerry seemed much touched by the frank, confiding manner of the child, which was quite unexpected to him.

"Bonnie wee bairn! bonnie wee bairn, surely it's sich as thysel' that's in heaven," he exclaimed, and again a tear stood in his eye as he humbly touched the little white hand with the tips of his fingers, instantly

however, withdrawing them, as if fearful of contaminating its purity. Tommy's thoughtful blue eyes were immediately fixed upon him with an earnest pitying look when he noticed the tear, and he seemed to be trying to think of something to give him to comfort him. Presently he said as if quite satisfied with his sudden thought:

"I'll ask Cousin Fwank to climb up and det you some chewies. Don't you want some putty wed chewies?" and not waiting to hear whether Jerry wanted them or not, he hurried off to engage Frank's services.

Mrs. Banks smiled very kindly, and patted Annie's cheek, when the little girl at length found her and told her that she had brought poor old Jerry to be ministered to. She invited the old man into her open pantry and had hot coffee and bread set before him, drew from him all she could of his history, (this however was very little,) gave him herbs and medicines for his rheumatism, and promised to go and see him. Meantime she told him, if he would, he might gather wild herbs and roots for her, which she was in want of, that

she would gladly buy them from him, and thus save his going so far for work until he felt stronger.

Much refreshed by his comfortable breakfast, he rose to go, leaving thanks and blessings for Annie and Mrs. Banks. Little Tommy came running in as he was going, laden with several large branches from the cherry-tree, filled with ripe luscious-looking fruit, which he put in Jerry's basket, saying:

"Tome adain when I'm a bidder boy, and I'll climb up the twee and det you some more."

After this friendly visit from old Jerry Thrip the children might entirely have overcome their fear of him, had not Frank and Alfred, aided by some of the servants set themselves industriously to work inventing new fables to his discredit. And by constantly holding him up as an object of terror and suspicion, they wrought so strongly upon their imaginations, that the feeling of dread and repugnance was daily becoming stronger and more deeply-rooted. A threat of sending for Jerry would, at any time, make them

perfectly obedient and submissive, much to the amusement of these mischievous boys. It was in vain that Annie joined with Mrs. Banks in trying to convince her little cousins that he was a poor harmless old man, for, on the other hand, Alfred and Frank read them awful stories of enchanters and such people, and told them that he was *one* of them, and that he was only trying to cheat Annie and Tommy, and get them into his house to work his magic spells upon them. They quoted with great effect the story of the spider and the fly, and from hearing these things reïterated so often, even Clara, Lizzie, and Fannie were not entirely free from suspicion of him.

CHAPTER XII.

Soon after this the little gardeners, when they came to their work, were greatly astonished at finding some new plants, which "nobody had planted," growing in Annie and Tommy's bed. They were not in bloom yet, but full of buds which would soon open. Mrs. Banks was called to look at them and say whether they could be weeds which had sprung up so suddenly since the Saturday before.

"Ill weeds grow apace, Annie, you know," she answered, smiling as she followed them to the spot. "But this is no weed, though not a very rare plant either—suppose you call Uncle Lemuel, my dears, and I expect he can tell you a great deal about it. I dare say the old man intended a pleasant surprise."

"He says he will come directly and see

it," said Susy; "but on his honor he does not know who planted them."

The old gardener came up now, following little Alice, to whom he was saying:

"No, indeed, Miss Alice! 'Twasn't me done it, I kin assure you, miss; but I spec there's mighty few flowers I don' know de names of, so I'll soon tell you what dey air. Lor! now, *wherever* dey come from, its only what dey call Canterbury bells after all!" he added, leaning on his spade and looking contemptuously down. "Its a right down pretty little flower dough, only I never plants 'um 'case *anybody tall* ken raise 'um. My ole missus now used to be kind a fond of 'um, and I rized the beautifullest ones long as she lived, but they'se growed so common since, all de poor folks has even tuck to planting 'um that I done give up, and dere ain't been one 'bout dis place for years. I wonder now, whar de name o' sense dese here did come from sure enough?"

"Alfred or Frank must have done it," said Fannie.

"That they must, and I'll go and ask

them again," exclaimed Henry, as he ran to the house to cross-question the older boys, who had pleaded laziness as an excuse for not coming out that morning, to help to work, as they had been doing lately quite regularly, and this made the girls still more suspicious of them.

"Tut, tut, tut, old Jack and the beanstalk," replied Alfred, laughing heartily as he followed Henry. "So you think Frank and I are fairies who can make flowers spring up by just looking on the ground. No, no! that's even beyond our powers; but we will go and see if we can make them open their mouths wide, and tell us at once where they sprung from."

"I don't see, after all, that it's any more wonderful than the strange freaks the lion has been playing off lately," said Frank.

"No, but *that* we could give old Jerry Thrip the credit of, you know; whereas this is plainly the work of fairies, and is very strange indeed," replied Alfred, delighted at another opportunity of mystifying the children and servants.

Even good placid Mrs. Banks said it was very strange, and the servants and children agreed that there certainly must be fairies or witches at work about the place, and there was no use denying it.

"What are faiwies, sister Annie," asked little Tommy as he listened to this solution of the mystery.

"Well, the story-books say they are little people dressed in green, I believe, Tommy, who dance by the light of the moon, and fly about doing all manner of strange things; nobody knows how."

"Where do they live—up in heaven?"

"Oh! no, Tom," said Alfred; "they only mount a broomstick now and then, to sweep cobwebs from the sky."

"How tan they do that, I wonder?" said the child, looking up earnestly to the far-off sky. "Do they have *tobwebs* up *there?* If I was to det up so high I'd ask the wittle angels to let me in."

"And they'd take you for one of themselves and do it certainly," replied Alfred, struck by the little fellow's angelic beauty as

he stood there on tiptoe, with his large blue eyes wide open, and his coral lips parted, showing two rows of little dazzling white teeth, while his auburn ringlets fell in rich masses on his dimpled shoulders, contrasting with their whiteness and with his little blue slip.

"Oh! how I wish they would," he exclaimed turning eagerly to Alfred. "I should *like* to be a wittle angel!"

"Tommy, Tommy, *darling* little brother, please don't say that, it almost frightens me," said Annie.

"Well, I won't, sister; but please tell me why? an't it very, very dood to be an angel?"

"Yes! oh yes! but *not yet*, Tommy. I couldn't let you go even to be an angel just yet," said Annie, clasping him tightly in her arms, her eyes filling with tears at the thought of losing him.

"I wouldn't like to leave my sister Annie either; but if they would take us both, sister, wouldn't that be nice?"

"Mamma and Alice, Tommy! could we

leave them? It would make them cry if they were to come home and not find us here."

"Yes, but sister!" said Tommy very earnestly. "Sister Alice told me may be she *never* would tome back any more, and that if she didn't, she hoped she would do to heaven where the angels live with God, and that would be her *home* then, and you know that mamma says that God took Papa to his heavenly home; so hadn't all of us better do there too?"

Annie could not answer, for her voice was choked with the tears she found so hard to keep from flowing: she bent her head therefore, in silence, and commenced preparing a place for some seed she held in her hand while one or two quiet drops watered the spot.

Alfred watched her for a few moments with his countenance unusually softened and grave, then turning abruptly to little Tommy, he picked him up and tossed him over his shoulder, exclaiming:

"Come, sir! no more of that talk here, if you please. Here I'll just make you a coat of green grass and send you off to fairy-land, and if you choose you may take the queen of the fairies for your little wife."

"You tan't make me a toat of gween gwass, and I don't want to do to faiwy-land, for I don't know where *that* is," answered Tommy.

"Come, then, and let me tell you about the fairies, those wonderful little people; and I'm sure you'll want to go and see for yourself all the marvels of fairy-land. In the first place they are *very, very* small, not much bigger than the end of your little thumb, and they live down deep in the cowslip bell, or some other pretty flower; and while the sun shines hot in the day, they stay there enjoying the cool shade, and the sweet odor of the flowers, overhearing all we big people say, and planning how they'll play tricks on us when we've gone away. They take all their naps in the day time, too, and come stealing out at night to dance by the light of the moon, or the glow-worm's taper.

"Do they? then I'll watch for 'em some night when the moon is shining."

"Oh! that would never do!" said Alfred with mock gravity. "The fairies don't like to be watched, and the fairy queen might come by and catch you up in her little coach and carry you off to fairy-land sure enough."

"How bid is her toach, and what is it made of?" asked Tommy.

"They say that sometimes she rides upon the thistle-down when she is in a great hurry; but I suppose on ordinary occasions a *very* small golden pumpkin would do, with grasshoppers for her steeds. Now I know you'd like to take Katy-did's place and drive them, wouldn't you?"

"I should like to see them, and I hope we will find some in our Canterbury bells when they bloom," replied Tommy.

All day the children talked about Annie and Tommy's strange flowers, and every morning ran eagerly to see their bloom. Great was the joy of all when, at length, the buds began to open, and the graceful bells,

some of deep blue, some paler, and some white, hung on the slender stalks. The beautiful "fairy bells," as they called them, almost made the children in their admiration forget even old Jerry Thrip

The next time they met at sunset on the "Mistletoe Hill," after the flowers had bloomed, Annie brought a little sprig to Mrs. Banks, saying:

"We must make this an emblem of something, Mrs. Banks, and I have brought it to ask you to find a name and motto for me."

The old lady smiling, took the flower in her hand and said, as she examined it thoughtfully:

"Let me see! here is white for love, and pale blue for peace; first separately, then blended in one bell. And here is humility's deeper shade, with the faint lilac tinge for gentleness; and all growing together on the same stem like members of the same family. The ringing of such bells would make sweet music in the house, you may be sure. Suppose then we call it Family Harmony. Two very pretty verses occur to me as being ap-

propriate for the motto. You can take both or choose between them as you like best. The first is from the 1st Epistle of St. Peter: 'Finally be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another; love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous.' The other one is from the 12th chapter of Romans: 'Be kindly affectioned one towards another, in honor preferring one another.'"

"But Mrs. Banks," said Clara, with a slight hesitation in her manner. "*Love* seems to form a part of every motto, and we have learned so many texts already about it, that I think we are having too much on the same subject."

"We began, my child, with the admission that Love helped all the other graces to grow, so no wonder it has a place in every motto. Love must mingle in whatever we do or say to others if we would be the children of Him of whom it is said: 'God is Love.'"

CHAPTER XIII.

"I'LL be bound for Annie. Nothing can put old Granny Grunt out of her head when Saturday afternoon comes round," said Lizzie.

"No, indeed. She ought to have her picture taken, and be called little Mother Merciful, with that long poky bonnet on, and walking so demurely, holding Tommy by one hand, and her basket of provisions in the other, never looking to the right or the left, till she reaches Granny's door; and then listening with a grave, pitying face all the time she is grunting out complaints about that dreadful rheumatiz, 'dat commences at de right arm, comes clean all down dat side till it reach de little toe, den begins again to travel up de little toe of de oder foot, and never stops coming upards till it rech de lef shoulder, and come out at de little lef finger,'" said Alfred, laughing and mimicking the voice and manner of the old woman. "Never

mind, little cousin, I'll go with you this time, and take your basket, and make you smile a little every now and then."

"Thank you, Cousin Alfred," replied Annie good-humoredly, "you might get your own picture taken, *as Father Condescension*, if you were to do such a thing as that; so I'd rather not trouble you."

"Well done, Annie! I'm glad you paid him this time for his impertinence. I didn't know you had so much spunk," said Fannie laughing.

"Here is your basket, Annie. I have added a little tea and light bread to the flour and molasses this evening, and I hope Granny will have a good time with her old man," said Mrs. Banks, coming out of the pantry with the well-filled basket.

"Give my love to her, Annie, please," said Clara, "and tell her I'll come to see her soon. I can't go this evening, though, for I really don't feel like it."

"An't you ashamed, Clara, to say you don't *feel like* doing what is right?" said Frank, winking towards Annie.

Without noticing this, Annie quietly tied her sun-bonnet, took up her basket, and with little Tommy holding her hand, walked down to the quarter.

Aunt Mindy was very old and infirm, and had gained the nick-name of Granny Grunt, from the many aches and pains she was apt to complain of, especially "the rheumatiz," of which Alfred had spoken. She was sincerely pious, though rather too superstitious; and her visions and dreams afforded great amusement to the boys, who often went to hear her experience, which they afterwards ridiculed. Her husband, "Ol man Adam," as she called him, was a short, stoutly-made man, with a very black complexion, quiet and humble in his manners. He belonged to a gentleman on a neighboring plantation; so the old couple only met on Saturday evenings, and parted again early Monday morning. Their devotion to each other was really affecting. Aunt Mindy was the oldest, and in her love there mingled a good deal of the patronizing and the condescending, although it was sincere and warm for all that; while

Adam, on his part, held his better half in the highest veneration, admiring her gift of the gab especially, and believing her visions the most wonderful with which a mortal creature was ever favored. She was always ready with a clean frock and turban to greet him when he came on Saturday evening, her face showing plainly the real unaffected happiness she felt. Some nice little dainty dish would be set out on the table for his refreshment, and by this a chair containing a clean suit of clothing, which he was expected to put on as soon as he had taken his repast. Then they sat down to talk over the week's occurrences, Aunt Mindy having much experience to tell, and good advice to give her old man, both as to his spiritual and temporal condition. After this they sang hymns and had prayers together. Annie scarcely ever failed to call and inquire after their health, bringing Mrs. Banks's weekly contribution to their comforts and reading them a chapter in the Bible. After she had gone, quite a number of colored friends would drop in to enjoy Aunt Mindy's good cheer, which she dispensed on

these occasions liberally, and to wish her old man and herself joy on their meeting again. The door was wide open when Annie came this evening, and the old couple were seated on low stools opposite to each other near the entrance, while further back on a long low bench placed against the bedstead, were three visitors. Aunt Mindy was leaning forward, with her pipe in her hand, singing one of her favorite hymns:

"Yes, my body's lyin' down a mouldin' in the clay,
But my spirit's a marching *home*.
O brothers! won't you help me to sing and to pray?
O *sisters!* won't you help me to sing and to pray?
For my body's lyin' down a mouldin' in the clay;
Yes, my body's lyin' down a mouldin' in the clay,
But my spirit's a marching *home*.
And if you get there before I do,
Be sure and say I'm a coming, too."

"Good-evening, Aunt Mindy. How do you and Uncle Adam do this evening? Tommy and I have come to inquire about you, and you see, Mrs. Banks has done her part, too," said Annie, smiling kindly as she handed the basket in.

"God bless you, my dear young Miss, and that sweet little Master, too. Much obleged to you, Miss Annie. I feels de pains *monstrous* sharp, sometimes; but I jes been a tellin' Adam dat de pains we suffers here is mighty little after all, when you comes to calculate de good what's a coming when we gets shut of dese ole tabernucles o' clay dats shakin' and totterin' all de time, like dey want to give notice dey an't got long to tarry. Miss Annie, honey, I ben thinking a heap all dis week 'bout your ma and dat precious, beautiful child, Miss Alice; and, says I to myself, it make no defference what happen to em after all, for dey got de promise of de Master that He never guine to forsake 'em, and *'pend* upon it, honey, he'll keep *his* word! And if deys in dis worle, or de tother one, he wid em all de *same*—septs, up dere dey free from all trouble, and never gwine to shed any more tears! Oh! when I studies 'bout dat good country, seems like I *couldn't* stay here no longer, *any how;* den dere comes sometimes a voice, and says, Mindy! Mindy! After I done lef my home, my father's house,

and de company of angels, to live in dat wicked worle, grieving all de time at de wickness of it, and den suffering cruel *torments* and death to save your soul, and buy you away from de Evil One, you gwine to grumble now 'bout finishing de day's work before you? Little enough I give you to do, any how, and it seems like you might do dat wid a good will, and wait my time fore you wants to wear de crown sted of de cross. Den I feels shamed of myself, and says yes, Master, I is a *mighty* wicked, grumbling ole creetur, show nough; but I gwine to *try* to do better, and spend de breath what's lef me in praising and serving dee, and I willin' to stay here jes as long as you please. Now, Miss Annie, please to read 'bout de prodigal son, cause dere, on dat bench, is poor Moses Roy, come to hear talkin' and readin' agin dis evening, cause he say what he hearn last time make him feel like he want to hear some more 'bout Jesus Christ; and I been trying to make him blieve what is de truth 'bout himself, dat if he only willin' to give up his sins and turn back from de ways he's ben gwine on in, dere's *One*

ready, willin' and waitin' to bid him welcome and help him on de way home; now, can't you tell him de same, and read it to him too, out de word?"

Annie looked in the direction to which Aunt Mindy pointed, and was touched very deeply to see the sorrowful yet earnest and inquiring look with which poor Moses was regarding her. He was a youth of nineteen or twenty, shabbily dressed, with his uncombed hair knotted over his head, and his whole person looking slovenly and neglected; his countenance was usually dull and heavy, and when questioned, his answers, hitherto, had exhibited not only total ignorance, but apparent apathy of mind; so that although he had lately joined Uncle Adam several times when he met him on his way to Aunt Mindy's, and sat there during the reading, Annie had not thought of his being attracted by any serious motive, and was accordingly surprised as well as gratified at Aunt Mindy's account. When she had finished reading the chapter the old woman requested, she tried to explain it, saying:

"Now, you see, Moses, that Aunt Mindy was right; for as soon as the father saw his poor son, who had gone so far away from him, and spent all his money, and gotten into bad company, coming back to him, though he was a long way off, he went to meet him, and fell on his neck and kissed him, and that's just the way with God and us; as soon as we want to give up our bad ways and do right, he is always glad to help us; so if you want to come to Jesus, he'll never turn away from you — only pray to him to forgive you all your sins, and teach you how to serve him, and he'll give you his Holy Spirit to make your heart all new and holy, and prepare you to go to heaven when you die."

"Yes, Moses, only jes turn your face de right way in *good earnest*, and pend upon it dat ole *Satan* never gwine to get de victry long as you keep on askin' de Gracious Master to 'liver you out o' his hands. Now, come tell Miss Annie all 'bout how you'se ben trying to do de way she telled us all out de good book, and how sorrowful you feel cause you couldn't do it," said Aunt Mindy.

Tears were rolling down poor Moses' cheeks, and putting his hands to his face he wept aloud. "Please, Miss Annie, I know I'se nothing but a poor nigger boy," he said, "what no body don't think nuttin 'bout, but somefin in me seem to say if Jesus love *every* body in de worle, and died for *every single* soul, like I ben hearn tell down here, may be he'll think 'bout me too, ef I pray like Aunt Mindy and Uncle Adam, and tries de way dey say, to do de very bes I kin; but I never knowed afore dat dis black skin wasn't de worst o' me, dat deres somefin sides *dat* to make God and every body in de worle hate me; for I an't nothin' but black inside and out, like de ole debil hisself. When I fust seed you come down here, I was visiting some of de people here, and we listened roun de house, and all of us laughed at de preachin' and prayin' in Aunt Mindy's cabin, but I thought I'd jes come in and hear too what 'twas all 'bout; an den, it seem mighty kine in de young Miss to come down so regular to see we colored people, and I kine o' liked to come and jes sat dere, even ef I went to sleep, for I never

hearn all de things you telled 'bout, and didn't know what 'em mean, tell I hearn Aunt Mindy keep seyin over 'bout Jesus lovin' *all* de worle so much, and dyin' on de cross to save *every* body; and you read dat chapter how it sey dey drove nails into his flesh, and a good deal more, yet he love de worle all de same, and want to get people to come to heaven. I kep thinking how *strange* it was, until it seemed like I want to love him and pray to him as I done tell you at fust; but my heart so black and bad, 'tan't fit for nothin."

"Don't you want a new one, then, Moses?" asked Annie.

"Yes, Miss, *indeed* I does!"

"Well, God has promised, if we ask him, to make our hearts all new again. None of us have good hearts! Every body is very wicked, until God changes their natures, and then we have to keep asking him afterwards to *keep* us holy, or we should fall back into our old ways. Now, I'll read you about the thief who was crucified with Jesus, and you'll see there's no body too sinful to be for-

given." As she read, she explained to Moses the meaning of all the words, and he seemed greatly comforted and encouraged by the chapter. Aunt Mindy added every now and then a word of exhortation, too.

"Now, mine, Moses," she said at last, seeming afraid he was going to find comfort too soon, "for all de way is very plain and sure while you'se strivin' to keep right in it—'taint sich a very easy road to travel nother. You got to keep watchin' and prayin' les, ef you don mine, de bridegroom will come at las and fine de virgin widout any oil in his lamp."

Annie found now that Tommy was getting tired and sleepy, so she rose to go.

"Good-by, Moses," she said, "I will ask God to bless you, and teach you to know how to serve him, and I hope He will make you very good and happy. Don't forget to keep on praying for yourself, and *believe* in the Lord Jesus all the time."

"Thank you, Miss Annie. I gwine to try wid all my might, Miss, to get to heaven. I know dat, and ef prayin' can take me dere,

my mouth an't gwine to be shet much o' de time," he answered.

When she offered her hand to Aunt Mindy, the old woman took it and held it in both of hers, while she looked up to heaven and fervently ejaculated: "God bless you, my dear, dear young Missus! Miss Annie," she added, "have you ever noticed o' nights, when de stars is shinin, how some is very big and bright, and others little and faint, yet dey all shine *some?* I 'spose I kin be like de littlest ones, any how; but you mus try to keep shinin brighter and brighter tell you'se givin all de light you possibly kin. Ef you please, Miss, could you take dese fresh eggs to divide 'tween you and Miss Clara and dis little Master, and tell Miss Clara I try not to think hard 'bout her not coming to see me sometimes wid you, but I'se disappointed every time you comes widout her, an' she ben *promisin' so long*, too."

Uncle Adam rose up to make a respectful obeisance, and Annie returned home, feeling well repaid for the trouble she had taken to

visit the old people, and full of interest in the case of poor Moses.

Her cousins had been walking together on the lawn since she left them, chatting in a sprightly, animated tone.

"Well, Lizzie," said Fannie, "I hope you got that great, long lesson in Ancient Geography for Mr. McLeod at last. I wouldn't be so bookish and proper as you are growing for a good deal."

"Umph! it's time for me to be growing dignified and to study up, Miss Fannie. Remember I'm almost grown."

"Well, young ladies, I'm pleased to find that Mr. McLeod can make you toe the mark rather better than poor Miss Binns did," said Alfred.

"Pugh! Miss Binns doesn't command any body's respect, and her lessons are pretty much humbuggeries, all of them," said Lizzie.

"Well now, Lizzie, for my part, I'm really attached to Miss Binns—bad as she thinks me—she never gives me any trouble about studying; the less you take the smarter she thinks you, and that suits me exactly, a great

deal better than to hear Mr. McLeod roar out: 'Thart's a very bard lesson, Miss Farnnie, and you will plase to take more trouble to prepare yourself before you come to school.' I don't know what he is going to say to me on Monday,' said Fannie.

"O you lazy little thing!" answered Lizzie; "to like Miss Binns just because you don't have to take any trouble about your lessons. I wonder what you go to school at all for?"

"Now, Clara, just let me tell you all about Miss Binn's school, and see if you would not agree with me that it's a great deal nicer than Mr. McLeod's. In the first place, Miss Hetty Jane Binns is an old maid, stiff, wrinkled, and most as proper as Lizzie there. She wears a brown merino dress in the winter, and purple calicoes in the summer, a black silk apron, with two egg-shaped pockets, a gold watch with a very fine chain, and black prunella shoes. On each side of her face is a little stiff short bunch of curls, and she sits in a straight-backed high chair, with a small square red table before her.

On this table are laid in the same spot every day, and just as even as they can lie side by side, a flat, yellow ruler, a red lead pencil, a penknife, and a square piece of india-rubber. Back of all these is the little brass bell that tingles whenever we make a noise or do any thing Miss Binns doesn't like. Exactly in the middle of the table is a little bundle wrapped in a bird's-eye napkin, and it always has the same things in it—from one year to another—two small rolls and a little round sugar-cake. We girls don't believe Miss Binns could eat any thing else at twelve o'clock if she was to try. Then there is a little space left on the table for the book when she is hearing a lesson; but sometimes Miss Binns sits up there herself, and puts her feet in the chair, I suppose to see us all better. At the back of her chair is a large blackboard, and on this is written always two or three sentences like these to keep us in mind, 'Order is heaven's first law,' 'Knowledge is power,' 'Time is more precious than gold'; and when the girls do any thing very, *very* naughty, their names are

written with what they've done bad under these sentences, for people to see who come into the school-room when we are not there —for she rents the room under the church, where they have prayer-meetings. But sometimes the girls play her a trick by getting in before any body comes, and rubbing every thing out or putting her own name up. In the middle of the room there hangs a little orrery with dear little green and blue and yellow balls for suns and moons. And on the wall are one or two large maps and some charts with every kind of shaped figures; she calls these geometrical charts. Two tall slender sticks stand under these, that look as if they were meant to whip us; but they an't—they are only *pointers*. Well, if Miss Binn's is in a good humor after she has opened school, she looks round and smiles at us all and says: 'Now, my dears, fold your hands upon your breasts and see how still you can keep. There! now you look just like little angels! Fannie, be a good girl too. Lizzie has turned round and nobody would know her for the same girl.

I have made up my mind not to be good, but to have some fun, so I look at the girls, say, 'Yes, Ma'am,' very gravely, and get up and turn all round and round, making all the fuss I can in doing it. Every body laughs except Miss Binns, she is ready to box my ears, but only rings the bell very loud and strikes the table with the ruler, till it has dents in it, telling the school, in a stern voice, to '*be still!*' Then she looks at me and says: 'Fannie Forrest, you *naughty* girl! go stand in the floor, and hold up your hand until I tell you to take it down.'

"'I'd like to know what in the world *I* have been doing, you told me to turn right round, and I did it—I can't help the girls laughing,' say I, with a very persecuted face· she calls me to her then and says, in a com passionate kind of voice:

"'Didn't you understand what I meant, my dear, by turning round? It's what they call a *figure of speech!*'

"I look very simple, and pumping up two big tears into my eyes, say:

"'I thought I did turn my figure round—

I tried, but there wasn't much room between the bench and the desk.'

"'Why, my dear, don't you indeed understand what is meant by a *figure of speech?* I must try to explain it to you.'

"The girls all giggle now, and Miss Hetty tells them that it is very impolite to laugh at people's mistakes; that if they were to go to Paris, nobody would laugh at them, no matter what bad French they should speak. Then she turns to me again and says: 'A figure of speech is employed when a person makes use of an expression that means something quite different from what the words would seem to do at first. For instance, suppose one day when you had been very naughty, I should say to the school in the evening, "Young ladies, Miss Fannie Forrest has behaved *beautifully* to-day"—that would be a figure of speech which is called *irony.* Do you think you understand that now?'

"'Yes, ma'am, I expect I do. It's what we children call telling stories, I suppose.

But I did not know, ma'am, that you ever told figures of speech!'

"Miss Binns gives a funny little smile, that looks as if she wasn't very much pleased, and says:

"'Excuse me, my dear Fannie; you are usually a very bright little girl. But really, *to-day*, my dear, you seem, if I may use the expression, you *seem* quite *stupid!*'

"'I have never been in the habit of being called stupid, and I'll tell mother she had better keep me at home, if I am so stupid,' I answer, looking very sulky; and Miss Binns looks frightened, and says:

"'I did not mean, my dear, that you actually *are* a stupid girl. I only said you *seemed so, to-day.* You know that I said first that *usually* you are *very bright.* I think you are smart enough, my child, and quite a good-looking little girl, too, when you are good. What I meant by turning round was turning round in your behavior; so go now to your seat and see if you can not sit up straight and fold your hands like one of my little angels. Mrs. Smith is coming in pre-

sently to see the school, and if you behave well, I will give you an *approbation*-ticket at the close of school.'

"Soon after this there's a knock at the door, and we all sit straight and clasp our hands upon our breasts, with our books lying open before us on the desk. A lady comes in and is introduced to the school by Miss Binns, who smiles and looks highly de lighted, as she glances round, then slyly lets a pin fall to see if she can hear it. Mrs. Smith stays a good while, and we all listen to her conversation; sometimes she tells us anecdotes about her own school-days for our edification. When she's gone, Miss Binns says:

"'You behaved beautifully, young ladies; I could actually hear a pin fall when Mrs. Smith came in; it was so still.'

"Then she calls up her classes, and we none of us know our lessons very well, but she is in too good-humor to scold, and so she tells us anecdotes about great men—that 'Dr. Franklin said if he was a shoe-black, he'd be the best one in the world,' for instance; but as she has told them very often before, we

know them all by heart, and I try to remember one that she don't happen to mention that day, and say: 'Wasn't it Sir Isaac Newton, ma'am, that used to be so occupied with his books that he would forget to go to his dinner when he was called?'

"'Yes, my dear; where did you read that?'

"'I didn't *read* it; I remembered what you told me once about him.'

"'You did? Well that's being a good attentive little girl, and you said your lesson pretty well too.'

"I toss my head and say: 'I hardly looked at the book.'

"'You didn't? Well, considering Fannie Forrest didn't look at her lesson, young ladies, she said it remarkably well, and I must give her two tickets of approbation this evening, one for her lesson and one for her good behavior. I have a school with a great deal of talent in it. Yes, I may say that though I have taught both at the North and the South, I never before had such a talented school.'

"'I should think, ma'am, it might then be called the *Augustine Age of your school;* mightn't it, Miss Binns?'

"'Why, Fannie! did you think of that yourself, my dear?'

"'Yes, ma'am!'

"'It is very smart, indeed, my child. I will write it down to let people know what a talented set of girls I have. Yes, it *may* be called the *Augustine* Age in my school life. I think I have mentioned, perhaps, young ladies, the origin of this expression; but if any of you do not remember, hold up your hands.'

"Well, then, in the evening as we go out of the room, we have to pass by Miss Binns' chair, and all who are to get approbation-tickets hold up their hands when they make their courtesy, and bid good evening; and she gives them a little piece of pink or blue paper, cut square, and pointed all round in little fine points, with 'Approbation' written in the middle of it. On Fridays we have oral instruction in geography and maps, biography, (I suppose it may be called,) the ele-

ments of geography and astronomy. We all stand in a line in front of the large maps, and Miss Binns puts one of the long slender rods in our hands by turns, and asks us to point out the different countries and cities in the world, and tell what productions they are remarkable for; but she tells us first herself—we only repeat after her, and then with these long sticks we sail all round the world on the maps. Miss Binns holds one pointer in her own hand to correct our mistakes, if we go wrong, or to tap on the floor with, if we are disorderly. The biography, as Alfred calls it, consists in questions put to the whole school, which we are all to answer together; and I tell you we do make a noise sometimes, talking just as loud as we can. The questions are such as these; 'Who was Benjamin Franklin?' or 'Who was General Washington?'

"'A great and good man.'

"'Do you mean, my dears, when you say a great and good man that he had a great big body or a great big soul?'

"'A great big soul.'

"'Yes, you are right; it was his great *soul* which made him so remarkable. What has he been called?'

"'The Father of his country.'

"After we have gone through General Washington and one or two others, she asks: 'Who is the best scholar in this school?'

"There is a good, quiet little girl who never does wrong, so every body calls out her name: 'Rebecca Bliss.'

"Miss Binns looks at her and smiles, and then says: 'And now tell me who is the worst.'

"Sometimes, indeed, very often poor 'Fannie Forrest' answers to this character; but sometimes she says:

"'What two young ladies have turned round and are trying to be good?' and the girls answer: 'Lizzie and Fannie Forrest.'

"Then comes our geometry; we have to use the pointers again for this, to point out first a square and tell how many sides it has, then a triangle, a pentagon, hexagon, heptagon, octagon, etc. Miss Binns has a little pasteboard box, besides, full of pieces of dif-

ferent colored morocco, cut in these shapes, which she holds up, and we call out the names. Then there are prisms, and pyramids, and all kinds of things, cut in wood, which we describe too. Last of all comes the astronomy, which we love dearly, as we have to wheel the little orrery round and round with the pointer, and tell the names of the little colored balls, and how far they are from the sun, and from our earth, and hear all about Sir William Herschel and 'George—Miss Sidus,' as we call it on purpose.'

"Now, Clara, wouldn't you rather go to Miss Binns than to Mr. McLeod?"

"I should like to go to her of all things. What fun you must have!"

"Oh! but Clara you would get so tired of so much nonsense. I am, for we go over and over the same things in the most tedious way, and I don't feel as if we learnt any thing, either," said Lizzie. "Sometimes I feel reproached, too, for laughing at the old lady so much, but you can hardly help it; and then she treats those scholars so badly

who are not well off, or whose parents are very strict with them, that we can't respect her much, and those of us who are not afraid of her, take up the cudgel for the persecuted ones and make her afraid of us; for we found out we could do this. But, Fannie, tell about the French."

"Oh! yes; we had a French teacher last winter, who used to come and give us lessons, and Miss Binns seemed to think her school was becoming something quite remarkable after this, and would look so pleased when we came from our class, and sometimes asked us questions on the lesson. One day, when I had been learning French about a week, she said to me:

"'Now, Fannie, my dear, I suppose if you were to go to Paris you could make yourself understood there, hey?'

"'No, indeed, ma'am, I couldn't.'

"'Why couldn't you, my dear? You could say '*donnez moi du pain*,' couldn't you?'

"'Oh! yes, ma'am. I could certainly say that.'

"'Well, I thought so, my dear.'

"'But, Miss Binns, I might want something besides bread.'

"'Yes, '*une tasse de the*,' for instance,' she said, smiling, and looking as satisfied and pleased as possible. So I told her yes, I thought I could go to Paris, and make my way all about by asking for bread and tea."

"Wasn't it Lizzie that thanked Miss Binns for all her instruction, and told her she never knew until a few days ago that a piece of red morocco wasn't a square, and a piece of green an oblong, just out of badness?" asked Alfred.

"Yes, Lizzie has been just as mischievous as any of us, though she's beginning to get such grown-up ways, nowadays," said Fannie.

"Well," said Clara, "I should like to go to Miss Binns for just one week, at least, to see you all at your pranks, for it must be very funny. But here comes dear little Annie; I must go meet her and hear about Granny Grunt."

Annie delivered the eggs and Granny's message to Clara, and then as they went to

their room by another entrance to the house, she gave an account of poor Moses Roy. Clara looked quite interested and serious as she listened and said:

"I know I ought to go to see after old Aunt Mindy sometimes, for it hurts her feelings to be neglected as she says 'by them she belongs to;' but she always talks in such a solemn way to me, that I dread it. But maybe it will do me as much good as poor Moses; so I'll turn over a new leaf, Annie, indeed I will, to-morrow."

CHAPTER XIV.

"MRS. BANKS, Uncle Simon says he heard there was going to be church to-morrow in the old ''piscopal church, whar Mas' Edward's family used to 'tend, long as was any minister thar'—I hope you will let us go, won't you; it's been nearly two years since I was in any kind of a church, I believe," said Clara the next Saturday morning, with great animation.

"Certainly, *we must* go!" Our pew will have to be full if the church is open, if only for the looks of the thing. Grandpa Ludwell used to be one of the vestrymen, and the family have always supported the church very warmly," said Frank oracularly.

"And there *has* been a time, my dear Mister Frank, when the Ludwells found pleasure in going to the house of God, not for the looks of the thing, but that they might join in worshipping him on his holy day."

"I didn't know there was any church in the neighborhood, but I'm so glad to find there is," said Annie.

"Yes, there's a grand old church about seven miles off, just as you approach the village of——. There hasn't been any preaching there, however, for five or six years, because we've got no Episcopal preacher now," replied Clara.

"No indeed — we stand a fine chance of turning heathen too," said Frank. "The servants and poor people around have their meeting-houses, but *they* are not very pleasant places for ladies and gentlemen, for they are what I call decidedly vulgar; so we lose our chance of hearing preaching at all," he continued lightly.

"I wonder, Mister Frank, if *some ladies* and *gentlemen* will not find that heaven is too vulgar a place for them, for I hope there'll be a great many poor people and servants there too," said Mrs. Banks gravely.

"I don't know, ma'am, how that will be; but I don't think it's very pleasant in this world to be crowded up with all sorts of

people, listening to coarse common language; as grandpa says it's very bad for our grammar. I wonder who is going to preach though to-morrow."

Uncle Simon now spoke up, saying in his slow, emphatic manner:

"I *hearn*, Mas' Frank, it was Parson Davis, what live down the river and have lately returned from crost the ocean."

"Will there be room for the whole ship's crew of us?" asked Fannie.

"We must manage to make room, Miss Fannie, as it's so seldom we can go to church; I would not like any body that is able to get out to stay at home," answered Mrs. Banks.

"Some might go on horseback, if the carriages won't hold all," suggested George.

"Yes, there are two riding-horses for Lizzie and Fannie, as they are so fond of riding, and Frank and Alfred's ponies," said Henry.

The two girls expressed themselves delighted with this arrangement, and the *young*

gentlemen enthusiastically commended the cleverness of the two younger boys.

"Mayn't we take our dinner in a basket, and eat it under the trees, Mrs. Banks. Then Aunt Lindy won't have any Sunday cooking to do," said Susy.

Mrs. Banks agreed, and this added very much to the anticipated pleasure of the ride. A great many petitions came in during the day from the servants, for leave to borrow horses from the overseer, and the good old lady kindly interested herself in making arrangements for the conveyance of all who were unable to walk such a distance. Presently Dinah came in, with a broad grin and a furtive glance at the young ladies and gentlemen, whom she seemed conscious were going to be very much diverted. With a low courtesy she said:

"Granny say, please, ma'am, kin you jis let her hab one blue counterpane to cover de wagon-top, Mr. Russell gwine to lend her to kep off de sun to-morrow as she go to meetin'."

"Well! I'd like to see granny's vehicle

when it's done," said Alfred, laughing heartily. "I suppose she thinks the blue counterpane will be the next thing to the blue sky. Ask the old woman, Dinah, if she would not like a green veil too? I'll promise to furnish one, as well as a pair of blue spectacles to keep her eyes safe and sound in her head, if she wants them."

"How *would* granny look, cousin Alf, in a green veil and blue spectacles, I wonder? An't you ashamed to tease her so?" asked Susy, laughing merrily at the same time over the comic picture which her fancy painted. Mrs. Banks promptly supplied the blue counterpane, as well as a new head handkerchief for the old woman.

The next morning was the first of June, and a lovelier Sabbath never dawned. Beaming faces were gathered around the breakfast-table; and Mrs. Banks, whose Sunday dress was always of a glossier black than the one she wore in the week, and her cap and kerchief a few shades whiter, without a tumble or a crease, looked the very happiest of that happy family. The provision-basket,

in their opinion, required their combined wisdom and skill to arrange in an approved manner. In good time, however, every thing was in readiness, and the cavalcade set forth. Alfred and Fannie put their horses immediately into a gallop, and by and by they came up with parties of servants and others, going in the same direction with themselves, some on foot, others riding; not unfrequently several were mounted upon the same beast. Mr. Russell, the overseer, had accommodated himself, his wife, and six children on two horses, and jogged on slowly and *contentedly*, in spite of the pity Fannie could not help feeling for the quiet, puny little baby, dressed in a bright yellow calico, lying on a pillow before its mother, who held the bridle loosely in her hand, permitting the horse to go its own gait, while she looked about her with an air of perfect unconcern. They next overtook Granny Grunt in a cart, covered with the top of an old spring wagon, over which Granny had drawn the blue-check counterpane — the original covering being worn out. It looked

very much like a moving tent, but it was easy to see, by the old woman's pleased and happy countenance, that she was quite satisfied with the arrangement. A bed was laid on the floor of the cart, and in the middle of this she sat, with plenty of room to spread her rheumatic limbs. Old man Adam was elevated on a stool secured by a rope, and the good old Christian couple were singing:

"Happy day, happy day,
When Jesus washed my sins away:
He taught me how to watch and pray,
And sing rejoicing all the day."

Annie was very glad that Mrs. Banks rode in the carriage with Clara and herself, for she loved to hear her talk of old times, when there had been service regularly every Sunday, and her grandparents, with her mother and uncle and aunt, had attended, and sat in the same pew to which they were going that morning.

Little Phebe made them laugh very much by asking, as they passed a small log cabin,

in front of which stood an apple-tree laden with unripe fruit:

"Mrs. Banks, would I be Adam and Eve if I was to jump out and eat all those apples up?"

"I don't think you'd be *any body* before you had done, if you were to try that," said George.

They arrived at the church some time before the hour for service, but already there were vehicles of various descriptions, as well as riding-horses, fastened a short distance off, while knots of persons were collected about the steps and doorway, or sauntering through the yard. Mrs. Banks and our little friends spent some time in reading the inscriptions on the discolored tombstones, in the venerable old churchyard, before they entered the building. Some of these were very touching, telling, as they did, the history of whole families who had passed away in a few short years; but there was one tall column of pure white marble, on which was inscribed: "To the Stranger and her Child."

"Who was she, do you know, Mrs.

Banks?" asked Lizzie, as they stood before it, full of eager interest.

"She came to the village, Miss Lizzie, with no name but Lucy—was very beautiful, but always dressed in deep mourning, and wore a black veil through which it was most impossible to see her face. She lived in a sweet little white cottage, with a garden in front, and the porch covered with vines. Her little daughter never went to play with other children, but was always at her mother's side. No body was ever asked into their house, although there were many who were anxious enough to get in, and tried very hard to do so. Some, too, followed her to the post-office, to see if by any chance the rest of her name would ever come out; but it never did; her letters were directed only to 'Lucy.'

"Every Sunday she was in church long before the congregation began to collect, seated in the corner of a pew, as much out of sight as possible, and sat as still as a stone all the time, with her eyes fixed on the minister's face. She sang very low, but

in one of the sweetest voices you ever heard. The poor people talked constantly of her kindness to them; she seemed to know directly any one was sick, or in any particular need, and to have money enough to relieve them whenever they called upon her for help. At last her child was taken ill, but she would not send for the doctor in the village—your grandfather had studied medicine and was an excellent physician, though he did not practise very much, and she sent to Belmont for him. He was very much surprised, as he had never spoken to her, but she had some reason which she told him for this; he kept his promise to her, however, faithfully, and never told any thing of what passed to any one, even your grandmother. The little one died, and she soon followed. When she was ill, a gray-haired old gentleman came to her cottage, and nursed her most tenderly—she took no notice of any thing, scarcely, after her child died; and he was not so particular about admitting people into the house when any one went that choose to inquire about her, and he always answered

them most kindly; but still the mystery was unsolved. Several times after, she sent for your grandfather. Your grandmother went to see her, and took me with her once or twice. I shall never forget one evening, in the spring of the year just before she died when we found her, sitting by the window, holding in her hand a book of most beautiful pressed flowers, with the names of different places in Europe, and the date marked on the bottom of the page. One with a long, slender stem, had become loosened from the book, and she held it in her thin white fingers, looking at it in her quiet, fixed way, as she said:

"'The color faded, its fragrance gone; nothing left but this poor, thin, shadowy remnant of what was once so beautiful — yet God made it, and nothing can stamp out the impression of his hand upon his own work. Yes! God made my poor broken heart. Yes! it is still his work, and they can't make him turn away his face from me.'

"The old gentleman looked very sad, and brought us away from her. We thought he

was afraid she would unconsciously betray something she would not wish us to hear. After she died, he went away directly, but left the money with your grandfather, and gave him directions to have this stone erected here, just as it is."

"Oh! how I should like to know more about her; who could she have been?" said Fannie.

The rest would have expressed the same desire, but the minister had come, and the people were beginning to go in.

The church was a noble old building, with thick walls, and a heavy gilded cornice round the interior. There were two chancels, in one of which was the reading-desk and communion-table, and in the other the pulpit. The floor was flagged with blocks of different colored marble, and on the pillars up the aisles were fastened little mahogany mite-boxes, with the inscription: "Give alms of thy goods, and never turn away thy face from any poor man, and then the face of the Lord shall not be turned away from thee.'

At the first of these boxes, Mrs. Banks paused to put in her contribution, and her example was followed by all the children, down to little Phebe; even "Mammy" had a mite to give. Then they passed on to the large square pew in front, with its high oaken back, and benches all around, roomy enough for the whole family and "Mammy" besides. Annie sat next to Mrs. Banks with a serious, thoughtful face; her prayer-book open and her eye resting on the words: "The Lord is in his holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before him." She was endeavoring to realize its meaning, and to keep that silence of the heart from all vain thoughts and worldly inclinations, which she felt that it required, when, just as the minister had entered the desk, and was about to begin the service, a confused noise was heard at the door, followed by creaking steps up the aisle, and more than one of the children tittered so loudly that she turned her head at length, to see what could have occasioned the disturbance, and could not forbear smiling herself at the strange-look-

ing figure before her. A homely-looking woman, about fifty years old, in a white muslin dress, made very much shorter than usual, coarse leather shoes, a broad pink sash, and a soiled white bonnet, with bows of every different colored ribbon that could be thought of, was walking with a mincing, affected step up the aisle, holding in her hands a little rocking-chair, which she placed just in front of Mr. Ludwell's pew, between it and the chancel.

As soon as she recollected herself, Annie turned away her head, and tried to forget the ludicrous spectacle; but her attention was often attracted, in spite of herself, by the loud, emphatic manner in which the responses were uttered; and when the singing commenced, such a strange, cracked voice rose above all the others, that it was impossible to keep back the smile it occasioned. In more than one pew, there was audible mirth. The minister looked puzzled and annoyed, but the singer had her head thrown back in the most complacent manner, while her foot beat time indefatigably. Annie was

relieved when they were seated again, for the reading of the lesson; but during the whole of the other parts of the service, the same painful effort was required to enable her to preserve that composure and solemnity of feeling which the time and place demanded. When the minister went into the pulpit, Annie turned so as entirely to lose sight of the stranger and her curious attitudes, but almost immediately the little rocking-chair was taken up, and in the same affected, mincing manner, moved in front of the other chancel, and so placed, that it was impossible to look at the minister without seeing those large, wild-looking gray eyes that were fixed upon him, and the bonnet and bows, bowing approval, or shaking in disapprobation.

Mrs. Banks, Annie and Tommy, were the only occupants of Mr. Ludwell's pew, who preserved the least appearance of gravity. Mammy was watching Miss Fancy Hunter's movements with the keenest sense of amusement depicted in her face, slyly nudging the child who sat next to her at every new de-

monstration; while several of the little children's laugh was heard more than once beyond the limits of their own pew, and it was evident that neither Lizzie, Fannie, Clara, Alfred or Frank were paying the least attention to any thing but Miss Fancy.

The text was: "Here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come." The subject was one which at this time came with peculiarly solemn force to Annie's mind, and as she listened to the words of the eloquent and earnest preacher, her heart was soon too full to be any longer conscious of the annoying presence which had at first disturbed her devotions. When the sermon was ended, she longed to slip away quietly by herself, and think of what she had heard; but they were soon surrounded by hosts of cousins and friends, who pressed round the children to speak to them, and make inquiries about the absent members of the family.

More than once Annie's lip quivered, as she answered to the questions about her precious sister, but she endeavored to command herself, and did not express the anxie-

ty which this circumstance had occasioned her. And to many her manner appeared only cold and restrained. Little Tommy was caressed, petted, and praised aloud, by almost every one that passed him. Mrs. Banks found some difficulty in declining the invitations which were urgently pressed, that the children and herself should stay and dine with some of their numerous friends and relations.

At length, to Annie's great relief, they had taken their seats in the carriage, and were about to drive off, when they were most unexpectedly stopped by no less a personage than Miss Fancy Hunter, who spied them just as she herself was about following her pet little rocking-chair into an old hearse, which had been slightly modified, and converted into an eccentric-looking carry-all. As soon as she caught a glimpse of Mrs. Banks's face, she jumped down from her vehicle, exclaiming in a loud tone, throwing back her head and raising her hands theatrically:

"Do my eyes inform me truly? Can that

be indeed Mrs. Banks—my time-honored and most worthy friend? Stop, driver! stop, and do not bear her hence, until I have endeavored to express the emotion which I feel, as like a swollen torrent, past memories rush over me at sight of this dear and venerable creature," she continued, rushing with extended arms to the carriage-window.

Mrs. Banks gave her a kind, pitying look, and murmured in a low voice: "Poor heart! as wild as ever!" Then she said aloud:

"Well, Fanny! how do you do? it has been a long time since we met, and I am very glad to see you."

"Why then, address me in such cold and studied phrase, and apply to me that homely appellation? Have you forgotten, dear friend, the melting scenes through which we passed in days of yore; or that I wander in maiden meditation, Fancy-free? No, I see by the kind look in your mild eye 'twas only a momentary slip of the tongue or the memory, so let me embrace thee, and then, formally present me by the softer, more euphonious, and poetically associated title

which I have chosen for myself, Fancy Hunter—begging grace of the ashes of my revered mother, whose plainer taste had selected one less appropriate to the unforeseen fate and fortunes of her daughter—to these sweet buds and blossoms whom my quick wit has already informed me, belong to the proud house of Ludwell."

The children laughed uncontrollably. Mrs. Banks smiled and said:

"As you have told them your name, it will only be necessary for me to correct a slight mistake you have made in theirs. These four are Mr. Edward's children; these two Miss Annie's; and those young ladies on horseback, with their brother, are from Washington, the Misses and young Mister Forest."

"From Washington, are they? That city, which, being named from the father of his country, stirs up our most patriotic emotions! I trust that breathing such air, you, Mr. Forest, are ever nourishing the free-born spirit which becomes an American citizen; while you, young ladies, amidst the gay scenes

of metropolitan life, will never lose your sense of nature's charms or relish for rural delights," she said with soft lisping tones, compressing her lips as she ended, and looking from one to the other, as if to mark the effect of her words.

Alfred made a low deferential bow and said:

"We feel too much honored, madam, that so distinguished a personage as yourself should express any interest in our future welfare or present enjoyment, and I must, in speaking of present enjoyment, not lose this opportunity of thanking you for the rare treat, which your sweet singing afforded us this morning."

Miss Fancy Hunter's eyes sparkled at this; she simpered and smiled, and tossed her head to one side, then said to Mrs. Banks in a low whisper, giggling affectedly as she did so:

"Why, my dear friend, what a remarkably pleasing young person he is! It has quite surprised and captivated me to find such polished ease and grace in one so young; and he is very handsome besides." Then

turning to Alfred, she continued in the same soft, simpering manner:

"Your compliment, so gracefully paid, Master Forest, falls gratefully upon my ear, and reminds me of what I often hear from the lips of a gifted young poet with whom I have the pleasure of boarding at this time. I mean that we rent apartments in the same lodging-house, not that he is mine host. No, for he is true to his brotherhood, and owning nothing but his brains, lives in an attic himself. He often avers with the most enchanting earnestness of manner, that to his ear no music is so captivating as the warbling of my 'native wood-notes wild;' strange, isn't it Mrs. Banks, that he should have made a quotation in application to myself, immediately preceded by the sweet little appellative which I have selected as my own. You remember the passage runs thus: 'Sweetest Shakspeare, Fancy's child, warble his native wood-notes wild.' And dear Mrs. Banks, I must describe to you a scene through which I passed a few days ago with this interesting youth, which would have done credit to a

tragedy of the highest order. I came in from a shopping expedition, and, going to mirror, was shocked and distressed to find quite a *visible* pimple just in the centre of my soft, downy cheek, as young Mr. so and so, as I choose for the present to call him, has more than once described it, in his sweet effusions in praise of my beauty. I had a little of your elder ointment in a jar, and forthwith determined to apply it to the offending cheek, which I did, and then, putting on my ruffled robe de chambry, sat down in my little rocking-chair—my sewing-chair as dear mamma used to call it when she made me sit up very straight in it, and deny myself the use of the rockers until I had finished my task. I was seated in this, reading some of the melodies of Lord Byron, when I looked upon the spotless coverlid of my bed, which was near me, and saw a huge creature approaching with wings of brilliant dyes. It was a fly, Mrs. Banks, but dear me, so *enormous!* and was evidently attracted by the elder ointment, and meditating an attack on my poor cheek. I turned very cold and thought

I should have fainted, but said to myself, 'For the sake of your lineage, Fancy, forbear,' and then armed with the courage of my forefathers, I screamed aloud for help, when instantly young Mr. —— appeared, and I pointed with my forefinger to the danger. With the coolness of a hero he instantly seized a weapon and *almost* destroyed the creature, but it escaped through the open window at last, and I in a husky tone could just utter, 'shut it!' when I fainted away. On coming too I found this interesting youth, who has the finest sensibilities in the world, holding my poor hand and weeping bitterly; but it reminds me he will have a thousand terrors, if I absent myself so long from home, and besides, I may be needed to provide in some way for his comfort: he is distressingly delicate; his life only prolonged by my tender nursing. Good-day! I shall take an early opportunity of renewing my friendship with you, Mrs. Banks, by calling at Belmont, and cultivating at the same time the acquaintance of these charming young people, especially of the gifted and interest-

ing Mr. Forest. Here, sir, is my hand to kiss! Ah! I shall make some body jealous when I report the scenes through which I have passed this morning."

Miss Fancy Hunter, with many smirks and grimaces, bowed herself off now, and returned to her hearse. When she was seated and about to drive off, she kissed her hand to the carriage and called out:

"I should have insisted *peremptorily* upon your whole party dining with me to-day, but just now I am living *incog*, and do not wish my dwelling to be traced—adieu!"

"Who in the world is she, Mrs. Banks?" exclaimed the children with one voice, laughing until the tears came.

"Poor Fanny Hunter! I have known her since she was a girl, and remember her when she was young, and quite handsome; and sensible enough too, but she has known her troubles as well as other people, poor creature. Disappointment and mortification drove her mad, but of late she has been harmless and only amuses people by her

queer ways, so they do not confine her as they once did.

"You'll have to give her history, Mrs Banks, as we take our dinners," said Alfred.

"It is only this, Mister Alfred. She was left a poor orphan and supported herself by teaching a small school, when she became engaged to a young physician of good standing, but too poor for them to be married. They waited a year or two, when her aunt died and left about five thousand dollars to her sister and nothing to Fanny. The gentleman then grew cold to her and addressed her sister instead. She accepted him, and poor Fanny, feeling injured and deceived by them both—it was an only sister to whom she had been devotedly attached—went crazy as I told you, through distress and disappointment."

CHAPTER XV.

As Mrs. Banks was busily engaged one morning in the pantry, preparing for a great brewing of her famous medicinal beer, she was suddenly interrupted by the entrance of mammy, in wrathful excitement, bringing Emmy tenderly in her arms, and dragging with her other the reluctant but dogged-looking Charlie; by turns she caressed and comforted the weeping darling, and denounced in the strongest terms her delinquent brother. She wound up a long tirade against him, by saying with a certain dignified, quiet determination of manner just as she reached the pantry-door:

"No, you needn't try to pull away from me *now*, Mas' Charles, because I'se going to take you *straight* to Miss Banks, sure as I'se a live, and jis hope she make you hop too! Umph! You nasty little fellow! I don

know what you *is* made of, *no how*, les 'tis bear's flesh — Jes to see ma'am," she continued, turning to Mrs. Banks, "what this boy's been doin' to his poor little sister, and she sick too—I lef' him there playing, while she was taking a nap, cause her poor little head ached, and he promised me to keep as still as a mouse, and when I comed back, ma'am, there he was — dressed up in one o' your caps and black wrappers, a old pair of spectacles on his eyes, looking like a great wolf, sure enough, and he'd a been stooping down, mooing in her face to wake her up, then he got in the bed by her, to play old wolf and Red-riding-Hood, and there's what he done to the blessed little patient creetur's neck and shoulder, calling it play." Saying this, she let go the child's hand to point out a long scratch which he had made on Emmy's neck, while her shoulder was deeply indented with the print of his little sharp teeth, which had penetrated far enough to draw blood: but no sooner did he feel mammy's hold upon his hand relaxed, than he darted off, and away he bounded, shoeless and

hatless, as fast as his feet could carry him, along a narrow, stony path leading down a steep hill to the spring-house, which stood in a pretty clump of trees at its base. Mammy was after him in a trice, unmindful now of rheumatism or advancing age. With a face as rigid as stone she pursued the chase, while Charlie dodged her, first behind one tree and then another, until watching his chance, he presently made off suddenly in quite another direction, and over the meadow he scampered, heedless of thorns and brambles. At last, his foot, already scratched and bleeding, was caught by his little torn stocking in a briery vine, and down he fell.

"Glad of it, serve you jes exacly right!" said the relentless mammy, jerking him up with far from gentle hands. "Boun' you don't get away *this* time," she added with a grim smile, as she carried him home tightly embraced in her arms. The children had all collected in the porch around Mrs. Banks, watching the whole proceeding. The *chase* excited such universal merriment, that even Emmy's tears were dried, and she had joined

in the laugh occasioned by the child's expertness in baffling mammy by his sudden flight over the meadow. The feeling which ensued when they saw him at length captured was something like the regretful pity which one feels at seeing the champion of an unworthy cause conquered after a brave struggle, mingled with a high sense of the ludicrous occasioned by mammy's triumphant air as she returned glorying in her victory. Charlie himself was hot and tired, as well as bruised and scratched, still not a tear escaped him; he preserved the same quiet, dogged, and slyly quizzical expression with which he had made his first appearance before Mrs. Banks in the pantry. Taking his hand from mammy with a gentle, sorrowful look, Mrs. Banks led him into her own chamber, combed his hair, washed his feet, and replacing his shoes and stockings sat him down to rest and *think* for awhile. The children meantime collected in the nursery, waiting to see how much further her punitive measures would extend, and mammy in their midst expatiated upon the whaling he

ought to get. But the kind old housekeeper found it very hard under the most aggravating circumstances to use the rod in real sober earnest, although she kept two ominous-looking bunches hung in full view over each side of her mantel-piece; she had tied them, however, with bright ribbons, and given them names which greatly amused her little charge. A stout, chunky-looking bunch of poplars, she called Dr. Birch, and some slender wiry-looking willows were introduced as his assistant Tommy-come-tickle-me, and many humorous legends she told of the wonderful cures wrought by the famous surgeon and his frisky little assistant upon bad-behaved children, at the same time solemnly reïterating her good wishes for her little folks, namely that they might never fall into the hands of these same great doctors; and up to this day none of them had: now, however, Charlie was doomed to test their curative powers. After he had become quite cool, and as he began to grow restless in his chair, she called him to the mantel-piece to take his choice between the two. Charlie eyed them

coolly for a few moments, as if measuring their different lengths, then chose the red-ribboned little willows—Tommy-come-tickle-me — which were immediately dislodged, while Mrs. Banks tried to shame the culprit into repentance, saying:

"Fie! fie! naughty boy! to use your fingers and teeth in such a way! Fingers and teeth which a good God gave you, to use *them* to bite and scratch your own little twin sister with! Shame upon you, Charlie! Show me now that naughty hand which made the ugly scratch! it shall feel the rod first."

Charlie held down his head and meekly presented his left hand, an almost imperceptible smile lurking for a moment in the corner of his mouth as he did so.

Tommy-come-tickle-me was brandished high in the air, about to descend with effective force, when, without changing countenance, Charlie quickly drew back the hand saying:

"No! Mrs. Banks, that wasn't the *bad* hand—this is it," extending the other in its

place, only, however, to be in turn withdrawn as soon as the critical moment arrived, with the exclamation:

"O Mrs. Banks! I forgot. I believe *this* is the naughty hand now and that one an't," handing back the one he had the moment before exonerated. The other children, who had gathered closely about the half-opened door, gave a suppressed though still quite audible giggle, at his adroit efforts to save the offending hand; even the good housekeeper could scarcely restrain a smile: yet no one saw the least change in Charlie's face which wore the appearance of the deepest seriousness. Once or twice more Mrs. Banks allowed him to shift hands in this way; then, she quietly took possession of them both, saying:

"Well, my dear, I think perhaps *both* may have been engaged in this naughty work, so they had best be punished together."

Whereupon they received so sharp a chastisement that Charlie was brought to tears and professed repentance with promises of amendment. Emmy came running in quickly to

intercede for his pardon, in which petition all the rest warmly joined, and Mrs. Banks promptly and kindly yielded, although she talked very severely of the consequences of another such offense. Mammy's spirit of retaliation, however, was by no means satisfied with such mild punishment, so she muttered her feelings of indignation at his being "let off without getting half enough for his badness."

"*Never* mind, boy! you'll suffer for it all yet one of dese days ef you don tek care, dough you don get nuffin wurse in dis world," was the consoling reflection with which she ended her complaints, and this, together with bestowing a double portion of caressing and petting upon "dear little Miss Emmy," seemed at length to soothe her troubled mind. Emmy's patient endurance was greatly strengthened by mammy's lavish and injudicious praises, and for the rest of the day Charlie and herself were warmer friends than usual; they trudged off together in search of berries and flowers, and built their houses of blocks and bricks in excellent hu-

mor with each other. Charlie, it is true, had his own way whenever he required it, but the remembrance of Tommy-come-tickle-me and Emmy's kind intercession had perhaps softened him, for he was not quite so exacting as common, while *she* was even more ready to yield, partly from a feeling of tenderness and pity excited by his punishment, and partly from good-humored self-complacency, with something of a desire to excite still further mammy's admiration, and to be regarded by the family in general as a little nursery heroine, for she loved dearly to be praised.

CHAPTER XVI.

"COUSIN Annie! Cousin Annie!" called out Susy and Alice the next afternoon, as they came running up to Clara and Annie's room. "We've come to beg for Tommy, to carry him down by the spring-house, where we are going to have a party—just a little play party, you know, because it's the dear little fellow's birthday. Won't you let him go? Harry and George have fixed us a grape-vine swing, and Aunt Lindy has baked us some of the tiniest little cakes and biscuits you ever saw! Mrs. Banks let us ask her to do it, because it's his birthday, and she has given us some tea and sugar; we can get just as much cream and butter as we want from Aunt Isy at the spring-house. We are going to use our dear little tea-set that grandpa gave us, and have a real fine time of it, too."

"Well, sister Annie'll let me doe, I know," said little Tommy, hastily throwing down his paint-box and pictures, and looking up eagerly into his sister's face for her to confirm his words.

Annie gave him a fond, reluctant glance, but could not resist his pleading eyes.

"Yes, Susy, he may go," she said, "but do take good care of him, please. I feel almost afraid to trust him out of my sight."

"Oh! indeed, I'll promise you to take the very best care of him, cousin. He shall be my child. We are going to play fathers and mothers, you see. Harry and I will take him and Charlie for our children, and Alice and Georgie will have Emmy for theirs." Annie felt decidedly uncomfortable when she heard Charlie and Tommy put together.

"I don't like that plan altogether, Susy," she said; then added in a whisper, "I am so afraid that Charlie might hurt him."

"Oh! yes; then he shan't come near him. Georgie and Alice *must* take him with Em. The fact is," she added, laughing, "Charlie is *so* bad that none of us wanted him, but we

can't leave him out, you know, Mrs. Banks wouldn't let us."

"Oh! no, I wouldn't do that, certainly," said Annie; "and maybe he'll be good this evening; but you know he did hurt Tommy once."

"Yes, I know he did; he hurts every body for that matter. Well, Cousin Annie, you dress Tommy up *very nicely*, and I'll promise to take good care of him, and not let him be hurt."

Annie smiled as she opened a drawer full of pretty suits of clothing, kept with the neatest possible care, and every morning sprinkled with fresh rose leaves. She selected a pair of ruffled paddies and a short white cambric slip, with little plaited ruffles round the neck and sleeves. And when he was dressed in these, with his corals clasped round his throat, and looping up the little short sleeves, she could scarcely contain her admiration and pride as she twined his silken ringlets round her finger, loving to linger over the sweet task of setting off his beauty to the greatest advantage. And how her

heart throbbed with exultation when she brought him down and heard from every lip exclamations of "how lovely!" "how beautiful!" With sweet unconscious innocence Tommy took Susy's hand and walked away, without seeming to hear the praises which were loudly spoken in spite of Annie's efforts to suppress them. She watched him from the nursery-window as long as he was in sight, then turned away with moistened eyes, saying:

"Oh! he is so lovely; certainly he is more beautiful every day, and then so sweet and good."

"There is no denying all that, coz," said Alfred, "but now that he is gone won't you come to the summer-house with us and join our reading-party? You give us precious little of your company when that pretty little doll-baby brother can furnish you with an excuse for withholding it."

"It isn't that I do not enjoy being with you all, Cousin Alfred, but I suppose you could hardly imagine just how I feel about Tommy. I do so love to make him happy,

to watch over him, and do every thing for him myself, and feel *sure* that he doesn't miss mother when I am with him. Then there is a strange feeling in my heart about him, too, a kind of misgiving that makes me almost tremble when he's out of sight. But I expect this is only because mother is so far away, and I am not used to so great a responsibility," she added, forcing a smile.

"That's all, you may depend upon it, you poor little motherly soul," said Alfred, trying to cheer her with his playful tone.

"The fact is, Annie," said Frank, "you are right foolish about the child; he's a perfect idol with you. I never saw any thing like it; you hardly ever look at him or speak of him without crying."

"I know it looks silly," said Annie, "and I struggle against it, but sometimes as I look at him, I feel that he *must* be too good and beautiful for this world, and when *that* feeling comes, and I think of our precious Alice, too, I can not bear it," and her tears were beginning to flow afresh.

"Come, dear Annie," said Lizzie, putting

her arm around her cousin's waist, and kissing away her tears, "you mustn't do so. It isn't right. Come now with us and hear Alfred and Frank read aloud; they read Shakspeare to us every afternoon."

"Yes," said Fannie, "I hope you'll come and take a good laugh. I wish we hadn't just finished 'The Taming of the Shrew.' It is so funny to hear Alfred read *that;* he seems to take such delight in it himself that any one would think he had had some experience, and believed that there really are such things as *shrews.*"

"They certainly would if they *knew* that he was brother to a certain Miss Fannie Forrest," replied Alfred.

All laughed, and looked mischievously at Fannie as this was said, and she enjoyed the retort, and laughed as heartily as any of them.

"I'll go and get my work and join you in a moment," said Annie, as she went to her room. Clara followed her; she had watched her with silent sympathy during the conversation about Tommy, when she had

with such unusual freedom expressed her feelings before the others.

"Dear Annie," she said, clasping her affectionately in her arms when they reached their chamber, "I love you dearly, *so dearly*, but I don't know what I can do for you."

Annie returned the pressure and kissed her warmly, saying:

"Thank you, dearest Clara, and so do I love you *very* dearly." Then putting her lips close to Clara's ear she whispered:

"You can pray for me, can't you, darling?"

"I do try to," said Clara, in the same low whisper.

Then Annie, having washed from her face all traces of tears, took her work-basket; and the two cousins, with their arms around each other's waists, went together to the summer-house.

"What shall we have this afternoon?" said Frank, opening the volume of Shakspeare which he had brought, when all were seated and ready to listen.

"We must let Cousin Annie choose," said Alfred, "as she is our invited guest. Read

out the names of the plays in that volume, Frank."

"'Midsummer Night's Dream,' 'Love's Labor Lost,' 'Merchant of Venice,' 'As You Like It,' and 'Taming of the Shrew,'" Frank read, and then said: "We have read all these except 'As You Like It,' 'All's Well that End's Well,' and 'Midsummer Night's Dream,' so which of these three do you choose, Annie?"

"I should like the last best, I think; "but I would rather some one else should decide," answered Annie.

"That's the very one I want to hear most," said Clara.

"And so do I," joined in several voices.

Accordingly that was decided upon, and very soon the whole party were deeply engaged with the entertaining vagaries of Messieurs Cobweb, Peas-Blossom, Mustard-Seed, Puck, and others.

Meanwhile the children at the spring-house were in the highest state of enjoyment. Under Harry and Georgie's arbor stood the little table, dressed with flowers, and fur-

nished with dainties; and there was the pretty little china set with the miniature silver tea-pot and cream-pot displayed in all their glory. The spot was shady and cool, and the children had gone early, so that they they might have a long afternoon for their party. As Tommy was the hero of the evening, they thought it was only proper that he should be crowned with flowers, to distinguish him from the rest. Accordingly they gathered some sprigs of the Canterbury Bell, and mingling these with coral, honeysuckle, roses, and jessamine, wove him a garland and wreath. The plan was that Henry and Susy were to give the feast in honor of their *son Tommy's* birthday, and George and Alice should be invited to bring their children, Charlie and Emmie. When they were seated on the large stones placed round the table for their accommodation during tea, Susy looked up from her waiter of cups and saucers, which she was scalding, with an uneasy, puzzled expression, and said:

"There! what will we do for *grass*? I

wish Mrs. Banks was here; this is our supper, you know."

"Oh! never mind," said Harry, "we can just say ourselves: 'We thank our Father for all these nice things and pretty flowers, and pray God to make us good, and take care of us.'"

"And let's ast him to bless the poor children, too," said Tommy.

Grace being said with childlike simplicity, they distributed the good things with mimic ceremony and politeness, and all but Tommy ate heartily and laughed merrily.

His plate, though piled with the daintiest morsels, remained almost untouched, but he laughed and talked with even more than his usual animation. Occasionally a clear, merry note would reach Annie in the summer-house, which made her smile and turn her face in the direction from whence it came. His face glowed with a deep crimson color, his eyes sparkled with peculiar lustre, and with his graceful, winning, sprightly little ways, he seemed to give a charm to all their plays, and to enter into them with the highest enjoy-

ment himself. Whilst they were still seated at the table, Charlie, looking towards a spot not far from the spring, where there was a thick growth of dogwood, elder, and laurel—the bright red berries of the elder contrasting with the rich green leaves of the latter, suddenly exclaimed:

"Bip! old fellow!" throwing at the same time a stone in the direction of his glance, "better get away from there, quick now, I tell you," he added, stooping to get another stone ready for a second throw.

At this the others all looked in the same direction, and to their great dismay, saw old Jerry Thrip gathering dogwood and elderberries in his basket.

"Oh! let's run to the house," whispered Emma and Alice, with countenances full of consternation and fear. "What will we do? Charlie is so naughty he'll make old Jerry Thrip come after us."

Instantly the table was deserted, and they all, even Charlie, too, began to run home. Tommy alone remained, and quietly taking

up his plate with both hands, moved off towards Jerry, saying:

"Sister Annie an't afwaid of him and neither am I; so I won't wun, but I'll just dive him my supper, as I don't want it."

"Heaven's blessin' on the bairn for evermair," said Jerry, as, after declining it several times, he at length took the offered plate, and emptied its contents into his cotton handkerchief.

"Now tell me, old Jerwy Thwip, are you a bad old man, and will you tidnap us and sell us?" asked he, looking with an earnest inquiring gaze into the old man's face.

"Evil indeed wad bae the heart could do *thee* ony ill; but it's na' Jerry Thrip wad lay hond on mon or child. Yet it's a' the same. I have someway sinned, and there's nae forgiveness with God or mon."

But seeing that his wild excited manner seemed to frighten the child, he ceased speaking, and smiled, as bowing his head almost playfully, he said:

"Thank ye, blithie birdie," then added, "Maybae ye wad like this putty thing,"

handing Tommy, as he spoke, an elder-twig, from a leaf of which was suspended something about the size and shaped like a small bird's egg. The color was a bright emerald green, studded with specks of glittering gold, and Tommy's eyes danced with delight as he took it, exclaiming:

"Oh! that is so pretty! A little faiwy! I must wun ast Cousin Alfwed if it isn't a beautiful little faiwy asleep." Eagerly he took a few hurried steps, and then turned to say:

"I fordot to say thant ye, old Jerwy; but I do thant you," he added, with a bright, winning smile.

"Don't greet yoursel' for that, bairn. It's thanks enough to see your sweet smiling e'en," said the old man.

As Tommy ran towards the house, he met his little playmates returning, accompanied by Annie, Clara, and Alfred.

"Look! look! Tousin Alfwed, I have taught one of the little faiwies asleep," he exclaimed, exhibiting his treasure with delight. "But stop," he added in a whisper,

"don't let's wate him till night, when the moon is shining, and then we'll see him dance."

"What is it? Where did you get it, Tommy?" were the eager questions put by the little voices, and repeated over and over again with the greatest rapidity. Alfred, Annie, and Clara also participated in the curiosity it excited.

"It's a dear little faiwy, an't it, Tousin Alfwed? Old Jerwy Thwip found him for me on a bush," said Tommy.

"You are most too much for me, now, Tom," said Alfred, "for really I never saw a fairy before, if this is one, and it may be for all I know; but I wonder you say 'he' and 'him,' for I should think it might be the little queen herself come to take you to fairy-land."

"Sister Annie, dont *you* think it's a faiwy? I wonder if it's the little Tueen's tar wage," said Tommy, turning to his sister.

"Oh! little brother, I forgot to tell you afterwards, the other day, that fairies are only make-believe people—there are no real

fairies; people only pretend so to make up pretty stories about them."

Little Tommy's countenance fell, and he looked grave and disappointed, as he said:

"And an't there any faiwies at all, sister?"

"No, Tommy, it's all just make-belief, every bit of it, like your plays this evening, when you were Harry and Susy's child."

"I am so sorwy, then, sister," he answered, with the same grave look, "that *you* told me so, betause you never made believe before, and now I won't always know that sister Annie tells me just true."

"I am sorry, too, dear little brother; and I meant to tell you better, directly Cousin Alfred had finished making you wonder over his pretty stories: but I forgot it afterwards; never mind, I won't do so any more; I'll try to tell you true all the time. Now let's go see if Mrs. Banks can tell us what this pretty thing is that Jerry gave you."

"Wasn't you afraid of old Jerry Tommy?" asked George and Henry.

"No! for he don't tidnap and hurt people at all, and I wish he had something

better to wear than that old torn, red toat, so people wouldn't be afraid, and wun away fum him."

When Mrs. Banks looked at Tommy's treasure she said:

"I don't *know;* but I expect it is a chrysalis, and if you will let me put it in this glass bowl on my mantle-piece, it is likely that by to-morrow or next day, it will be even prettier than it is now."

"I never saw a chrysalis like that," said Alfred; "I thought they were always an ugly, dull brown."

"I have generally seen them so, too," said Mrs. Banks; "but I don't know what else this can be."

So the "pretty green thing" was put into a covered glass bowl, and the children thought they would watch it and see how it could be any prettier. But now they must hurry back to the spring and finish their plays. Tommy cast a wistful look after Mrs. Banks as she bore off his prize, and then followed the others.

"Now let's put up our cups and saucers,

and clear up the table," said housekeeping Susy; "then the children shall swing. We must invite Charlie and Emmy to swing first, though, because you know they are your company, Tommy."

"Yes! and while they swin' I'll just rest, for I'm tired," said the little fellow, laying himself down as he spoke. And nothing could have been more exquisitely lovely than he looked, lying there with his crimson cheeks and sunny curls, on the green grass, and his bright eyes looking upwards with a wandering dreamy look. His wreath and garland having become partially disarranged, were thrown negligently over his face, neck, and arms.

"Now, Tom, it's your turn," said Henry, after a while, trying at the same time to get Charlie from the swing.

"No! I shan't get out yet," said Charlie. "I want to swing some more."

"But you *shall*, sir! for you have had a long swing, and Tommy has not had any yet," replied Henry.

"Well, I won't get out till I have had another, just one more," answered Charlie.

"That's what you said before, sir."

"Let him swing some more, Henry. I don't care much about it, anyhow, this evening," said Tommy.

"Oh! yes, you do," replied Henry; "and you shall have a first-rate time, too, when you do get in. You shall go as high as we can send you, and as long as you want to."

Tommy smiled, but did not say any thing, and Charlie took another turn, and when they stopped the swing next time, he jumped out himself and ran to Tommy saying, as he stopped to help him up:

"I'll give you the place now, Tommy, for I've done with it."

Henry took his hand to urge him on, too, for Tommy looked reluctant, and moved slowly.

"Now, come, Georgie," he said when they had placed him in the swinging branch of the wild grape-vine. "We must send him up to the top of that little tree."

As he ascended they heard a sound, which

they thought was an exclamation of pleasure, and animated by this, redoubled their efforts to send him still higher; for not looking at him, they did not see that he was deadly pale when he came down, and that his hold upon the vine was relaxed, and his feet hanging heavily downwards. Up went the branch for the second time, and "hurrah!" exclaimed the boys, in delight at their successful toss; but what was the consternation and horror of all, when as it was descending again, Tommy fell back, lifeless on the ground. Their shrieks rent the air, but no one stirred; they stood as if petrified, gazing on his pale face and motionless body. Almost instantly, however, there was a rustling among the bushes, and old Jerry Thrip sprung out, casting a hurried, sorrowful look at the beautiful child; he took him up tenderly and reverently in his arms and bore him towards the house—the children following in subdued silence. Very soon they met Mrs. Banks, Frank, Alfred, and several of the servants hurrying to the place, having heard the shrill cry which followed the fall

"What has happened?" exclaimed the old lady. "God forbid that any evil has befallen this sweet child!"

"I saw him fall frae the swing, is all that I ken, ladie!" said Jerry. "But it maybae that the breath is but gane for a time."

Mammy here made an effort to take Tommy from his arms, but he held him firmly though gently saying:

"Na, good woman! let the lambie lie still in my arms, tel' I put him on his bed; and had na' ye better send for the doctor?" he added, turning to Mrs. Banks, who quickly gave orders to a man-servant, and then hurried forward to where Annie, Clara, and the two other girls were standing, a pale, breathless, frightened group. Annie's face was white and rigid as marble, she was in an eager, listening attitude, only preserving strength enough to stand, by the exercise of the greatest self-command.

"A fall from the swing, my dear," said Mrs. Banks, gently trying to relieve her terrible suspense. "I hope he will soon be better, but just now he is in a swoon. They

are bringing him to the house, and I have sent for Dr. Medhurst."

Annie put both hands before her face for a few moments, and when she removed them was calm and self-possessed, though still pale as marble, and with a dark circle under each eye. She ran instantly to her room, threw up the south window, and all unassisted, drew his little bedstead in front of it, arranged the pillows ready for them to lay him down; and then took from a drawer the bottle of ammonia which she had seen her mother, under similar circumstances, use for Alice. She returned just as they were about to carry him to Mrs. Banks's room, it being nearer than her own, and motioned to them to carry him up-stairs; then turning to Lizzie, whispered:

"Will you ask, dear Lizzie, that he may be left alone with Mrs. Banks and myself. It is bad to crowd round him so."

Jerry stood for a while in the doorway, after he had laid him on the bed, looking wistfully at Mrs. Banks and Annie as they bathed his temples with cold water, and held

the hartshorn to his nostrils. At length those deep, blue eyes opened and the lips parted, but the look that met his sister's anxious, yearning gaze was not that she was wont to see shining from those transparent depths. Those open windows of the soul—the "meek intelligence," and the tender, loving, trusting look were gone! A few moments he stared vacantly around, and then the lids closed heavily again, and he fell asleep.

Old Jerry moved silently away. Mrs. Banks, with noiseless tread, darkened the chamber into which the rays of the setting sun were streaming, and closed the door, leaving Annie alone, kneeling over the couch of that darling little brother whom but a few hours before she had, in the pride of her heart, decked for the feast and sent off, delighting to hear the praises which none could withhold, yet trembling at his unearthly beauty. Holding his little hand in hers, and gazing intently on his pallid brow, she tried to pray, murmured a few words, and then ceased; her mind was confused and darkened; her aching, throbbing heart could feel

but one presence, and that was not the Unseen One. She thought of her mother—blamed herself—listened to every breath—longed for the doctor to come—tried to imagine what he would say—shuddered at what that might possibly be; and then an inward numbness seemed to come upon her—her heart lay still like something frozen or dead within her. The beating pulse and throbbing temple betokened only the body's life. But what hand would venture to lift the curtain and unveil all the feelings of that sad young heart in this hour of anxious solitude. After a while, however, as she felt the little hand growing warmer and warmer in her own, and saw the healthful glow, as she supposed, displacing the pallor on his cheek hope revived, and bending her head, she wept her first tears. The current once beginning to flow, poured forth its torrents freely. For a few moments she indulged herself in this, the sad heart's luxury; then looking up thankfully, she gently rose and left the room to give the glad tidings to the household, that he was "much better."

Clara was seated on the staircase near the door, listening to catch every sound within, and when she saw Annie, hastened forward to meet her. With the quick, full sympathy of a warm and loving heart, she rejoiced in the good news which her cousin brought, and offered to be her messenger to the rest of the family.

"And Alfred asked me, dear Annie," she said, "to let you know, as soon as I could, that he has gone to the city to bring his father and mother, as well as to see if Dr. Thompson will not come, too, and if he will, to urge him to do so without delay. He thinks he will be back by daylight, with Cousin Susan and Cousin Thomas; and I trust their coming will be a relief to you. The doctor may get here much sooner, Alfred says."

"I am so much obliged to him, and so thankful to you all, every one of you, for your kindness and love," said Annie. "Tell them all so, dear Clara, for me; and don't forget," she added tearfully, "to thank God for me."

Then she softly closed the door after her,

as she returned to the room. And again she was alone with Tommy—"alone, yet not alone," for *now* she felt the presence of her Father, God, and kneeling before the open window, after she had drawn back the curtain, and looking at the bright moon, as almost at its full, it sailed in silent majesty along the cloudless vault of heaven, she poured forth her grateful praises, with a deeper love than she had ever felt before. "The goodness of God endureth *forever*. *Truly* God is good to those that trust in him. While I live I will love thee—my mouth shall talk of all thy doings. With my lips will I declare thy praises. Praise the Lord, O my soul! Let every thing which hath breath praise the Lord," she repeated fervently, over and over again, memory readily supplying the words she needed, from her store of Scripture knowledge. And when she had thus, by expression, strengthened her faith and kindled her love, she ventured to offer her petitions to the Throne of Grace. And oh! how sweet to feel that, though her dear mother was not present to her bodily

sight, yet now in this still solemn hour their hearts were bowed together, claiming mercy in the same dear Saviour's name.

The last words of her prayer were uttered in a faint, inaudible tone, but came no less from the depths of her soul: "Teach me to say, thy will be done;" and then she rose up comforted. Another look at Tommy satisfied her that all was well; she did not touch him for fear of awakening him; he seemed to be sleeping so sweetly, and the bright red color which had made him so peculiarly lovely all the afternoon had returned, if any thing, deepened.

"And in the morning he will be just as well as ever," she said to herself, and smiled as she undressed herself; then quietly seated herself, with her head resting on his pillow, thinking she would remain so until he waked, when she could take her usual place beside him. But overcome by fatigue and exhaustion from all that she had passed through during that eventful evening, she fell into a profound slumber.

And so Mrs. Banks found her when she

came in, to see for herself how the little patient was faring. The experienced eye of the good housekeeper soon detected danger in those brightly glowing cheeks, and touching his hands, she was startled by their burning heat. Her first act was to call "Mammy," and with her assistance, Annie was gently laid on the other bed. This was done without awakening her; she only smiled as they laid her down, and reached out her arm to put it as usual protectingly over Tommy. It rested on the pillow, and she slept on as before.

Mrs. Banks then placed Tommy's feet in a warm bath, and made cold applications to his head; nothing, however, roused him for more than an instant. If he opened his eyes, they closed heavily again immediately. All night the kind old lady kept her place beside him, trying every remedy which her simple skill suggested, and "Mammy" waited within call, whilst sleep and silence reigned throughout the rest of the house.

CHAPTER XVII.

"In the morning he will be as well as ever." Poor Annie! How little she anticipated all *that* morning had in store for her! It was very late before she awakened from the deep sleep into which those comforting words had lulled her wearied body and agitated mind. The sun was high in the heavens, but little light came through the closed blinds of the darkened chamber. Once or twice she had partly opened her eyes, but the stillness and darkness made her close them again; presently however, a sound fell on her ear, at which she started up suddenly in the bed, and stared wildly about her. It was a low moan from Tommy, as he tossed restlessly from side to side. Annie's first impulse was to reach out her hand to feel for him; but missing his little form from her side. she sprang frightened from the bed;

some one caught her as she did so, and led her gently but forcibly out of the room—not however before her eye caught sight of a form leaning over the bed of her little brother, whom she instantly knew could be none other than that of her own dear mother. And as she turned, what was her surprise to find that it was her grandfather's arm which supported her trembling form and brought her out. The door of the room to which he led her was open, and embracing her tenderly, he murmured:

"Bless you, my poor, dear child!" then left her with Mrs. Banks and her cousin Susan Forrest.

"Where am I?" exclaimed the bewildered and frightened child. "Oh! tell me what all this means! Tommy, my own little brother! What can have happened? What is it? How is he? and my mother! how *came she* here?"

With words as soft as love and pity could suggest, her kind friends made the necessary explanations.

"Tommy is extremely ill, my child, but

he is in our *Father's* hands you know, and he will not suffer any thing which is not for his good to befall him," said good Mrs. Banks.

"And your dear mother has been mercifully permitted to get back in time to watch over him herself," said Mrs. Forrest. "She reached my house last night, and was to have rested there till morning, when Alfred's sad tidings brought us all here together."

Mrs. Forrest pressed Annie tenderly to her heart as she said this, and then added immediately, to prevent further questioning: "Now, let me dress you quickly, and if you will try to be composed I will bring your mother to see you; but remember, my dear, what a great shock this has been to her, and for her sake repress as much as possible the expression of your feelings. She can not bear excitement now. You are her own child though, and I am sure you can control yourself for her sake." As she said this she patted her cheek and smiled kindly. Annie caught her hand, and looking earnestly into her face said:

"Cousin Susan, how is dearest *Alice*, and where is *she?*"

Mrs. Forrest turned away her head quickly, and stooped to pick something from the floor, then hurriedly left the room without speaking until she reached the door, when she turned to say:

"Make haste, my dear Annie, in a very few minutes I will bring your mother."

She hoped this would excite and hurry Annie, so that she would be too much occupied to renew her questions; but she turned now to Mrs. Banks, and with a pleading anxious look asked this time:

"Is Alice better?"

"She is better, my child, much better than we have ever seen her, I am sure she *must* be," answered the old lady.

Annie's face brightened as she now asked:

"And *where* is she, dear Mrs. Banks?"

"My child, I trust she is at *home.* Your mother, when she comes, will tell you all about her journey," replied Mrs. Banks solemnly, but making an effort to conceal her emotion, then she also left the room.

"At *home!* and spoken in such a sad and solemn tone! What can it mean?" Annie asked herself, but not daring to question too deeply about it, she determined to turn at once to the more cheering words "*much better*," and force herself to hope every thing from them, lest she should be utterly overwhelmed with the fears that oppressed her. When she had dressed herself, with the greatest rapidity she paced the room, waiting impatiently for her mother to come. A much longer time, however, elapsed than Mrs. Forrest had promised, and still she was kept in terrible suspense. At last she heard a gentle motion, and looking up, saw her mother standing in the doorway, where she had paused for a moment to regain calmness and strength. Ah! how strongly sorrow had laid its mark upon that white, still face! the hair on her temples was silvered, too, and she moved so lightly and silently, that it was almost like the gliding of one from the *spirit-land;* where also might have been learned that touch, so soft and gentle, that it scarcely seemed a reality, and yet so exqui-

sitely tender. But for this almost ethereal softness, the embrace in which she folded her child, and the kisses she imprinted on her lips and brow, might have seemed cold, from their great *calmness*, but in this was expressed the deepest, tenderest love a *mother's* heart could feel, blended with something spiritual and heavenly. It was in vain that Annie sought to keep back the tide of feeling which almost overpowered her. No sooner did she feel her head upon her mother's shoulder than she gave way, and wept such tears as *can* be wept only on the maternal bosom; nor was that frail mother's form too weak to bear the burden of her childish sorrow. In her spiritual strength she stood erect, strong enough for both, and bowing her head close to her daughter's ear, whispered in a very low yet steady voice: "It is the Lord: let him do what seemeth him right; for he doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men. Shall the potsherd strive with its maker? or the thing formed say to him that formed it, what doest thou? The Lord of hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is our

refuge. Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning." And when with such soothing and comforting language Annie was composed and strengthened, she heard from her lips, what she could hardly have borne to hear from any other, the explanation of Mrs. Banks's answer. Alice was indeed "*at home*:" but it was in that fair city which "hath no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God doth lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof." Their hopes with regard to the sea-voyage had all been disappointed; instead of becoming stronger, she had grown weaker, almost daily, until, at length, just as they were approaching Marseilles, she sunk rapidly to her rest, or, "should I not rather say she *rose* a *glorious* star in heaven, a star which shall never set, but shine on in cloudless splendor forever and forever?" asked the mother with a look of steadfast trust. "I will give you now, my darling, her parting kiss and message of love to you *both*," she added with a faltering of her voice on that last word "*both*." Kiss-

ing Annie tenderly, she then repeated the message: "For a little while we shall not see each other; but I go to *our* Father. Very soon we shall be united again, *never* more to part. The Good Shepherd will be with you to the *end*, as he has been with me. May he ever bless, comfort, guide and keep you."

"Only a *little while*, and we shall *all* be with him," continued Mrs. Lee. "Her grave is beneath the blue waters, where we placed her at sunset of the same day on which, at early dawn, our Father called her to himself. Some other time we will talk more about it; enough now, that meeting next morning a vessel returning, I took passage in it, and so, instead of the letter you expected, *am here*. Is there not *something* in *this* to be thankful for?"

Mrs. Banks now returned to the room, bringing a waiter, on which was a slight breakfast, carefully and temptingly prepared for A nie and her mother.

"Take something, my child, you will need it," said Mrs. Lee persuasively, as she saw

Annie turn away her head; at the same time she forced herself to swallow a cup of tea and a little morsel of food; when this was over, she looked earnestly and sadly in Annie's face as she asked:

"Are you prepared, now, my child, to return with me to your brother's room? remember that we must let nothing be there to mar the peace of his *last hours!*" Seeing that poor Annie turned deadly pale and trembled violently at these words, she drew her still closer to her heart, while she supported her with her arm, and whispered: "When my heart is overwhelmed, lead me to the Rock which is higher than I. Let us seek our strength there." Mrs. Banks left them alone, closing the door gently after her, and they resorted together, unto "the name of the Lord, which is a strong tower."

The blinds of little Tommy's room were no longer closed; light and air might now both be freely admitted. Over his pallid face had passed that mysterious and shadowy change which betokens coming dissolution, and he lay perfectly still, except for the

hard, labored breathing which agitated his frame, and resounded mournfully through the silent chamber. General Lee and Mrs. Forrest relinquished their places by his bedside, and the mother and sister took each one of his little cold hands in theirs. And oh! so gladly would they have imparted to them warmth from their own. Presently he began to breathe more gently, fainter and fainter grew each breath until it seemed almost gone; when suddenly he revived, a new light shone in his eye, and a smile was on his lip as he looked, first at Annie, then at his *mother* in glad surprise; for a moment after this, his face seemed gravely to question hers, then beamed with supernatural light, and he murmured as if in answer to himself:

"Yes, I expect sister Allie is at *home.*"

One large tear-drop stood upon his mother's eyelid as she stooped to kiss him; it did not fall, however, but glistened there till *all was over.* Tommy put his little cold arm fondly round her neck, and held her head down by his a few moments; then his hold

was relaxed and he lay motionless again, scarcely breathing. A half-hour of this solemn stillness passed, when again he revived, turned to kiss Annie, and asked to see Mrs. Banks and his little cousins. His grandfather, who was standing near the head of his bed, now turned his face to the wall and wept like a child. Tommy heard him, and glanced with a sad disquieted look from side to side until his eyes rested on Charlie, who, clinging to Mrs. Banks, with his face buried in a little red silk handkerchief, was weeping bitterly.

"Don't cwy, Charlie," Tommy whispered faintly. "Jesus will let you in. I'll beg the angels to make woom for you and gwandpa and all of 'em. Now mother, won't you sing 'Jesus loves you, wittle children.'"

His mother commenced it alone, but he looked as if something else was wanted, and turning to Annie, motioned for her and his little cousins to sing too, which they did:

"Jesus loves you, little children,
Loved you ever, loves you now,
Loves to hear the prayers you offer,
When before his throne you bow.

"Little can you do to serve him,
But that little he will heed,
Ever pouring out a blessing
On each gentle kindly deed.

"Small are all your little troubles,
But large enough for his dear love;
Large enough for him to carry
Him to soothe from heaven above.

"Slight are all your little pleasures,
Yet he deigns to take a share,
Deigns to smile when you are happy,
In each joy himself is there.

"'Twas for you his spirit tasted
Such a bitter cup of woe;
And he lived an earthly infant,
That you might a Saviour know.

"When upon the cross so freely
Jesus shed his precious blood,
'Twas that lambs, as well as elders,
Might be reconciled to God.

"Now he's still in glory living,
Lives a Man, and yet a King;
Lives that he, all little children
Might to God the Father bring.

"For he loves the tender blossom
Fondly as the full-blown rose,
And he smiles when pure and spotless,
Bright in heaven it fully blows.

"Come then, children, to this Saviour,
Lift your little hands to Him;
You have a Lord who *loves* to cleanse you
From the guilt and power of sin."

Little Tommy smiled at first as they began the singing, then closed his eyes and folded his hands until they finished. As he opened them again, he sighed and murmured "Poor Jerwy!" Jerry had wandered round the house all night in great grief, and in the morning seized the first opportunity of hearing how the child was; when told at length that the doctor said he would die before night, the poor old man took his seat on the door-step, with his face buried in his hands, muttering to himself. Jackson came out once officiously to order him off; but he said, so beseechingly that even he was touched:

"Only let me bae tell he's awa an I'll mak nae noise wi me greetin' to disturb ye. Oh! if I might but see his cannie face but *ance* mair, and hear sweet words from his bonnie lips!"

When Mrs. Banks heard that he was there,

she went out and spoke very kindly to him, and invited him to come into the kitchen and get something to eat; he refused, however, and wept only more wildly. When little Tommy mentioned his name, she whispered to Mrs. Lee, who asked:

"Would you like to see Jerry, my son?"

He smiled, bowed his head, and added: "And all the servants too." As soon as his eye rested upon Jerry, he turned to Annie, and asked for his "pretty gween thing." The bowl containing it was brought, and the top being taken off, a splendid butterfly was seen, just emerging from the covering it had woven round itself. With a bright beaming face, Tommy said faintly, as he perceived this, "It's wating up!" then as if recollecting something, shook his head solemnly, and looking at Jerry, said: "No! *there an't any faiwies!*" His face looked troubled as he next glanced towards Annie, but quickly recovered its sweet, bright look, as he added:

"But sister Annie didn't mean to; she fordot." He then left the bowl in his sister's hand, and holding out his own to Jerry, said,

in a voice scarcely more than a sigh, with a long pause between each word:

"Jesus—loves—the—poor—too—mother—and—sister—Annie—will—tell—you—about—him—and—about—the—bwight—mansions—he's—got—in—heaven—for—us." This effort so exhausted him, that he spoke no more, but held out his hands, as if he wished his mother to take him up, which she did, and holding him to her bosom, sang him the same nursery hymns with which she had so often lulled him to his nightly slumbers. A little before sunset his frame quivered with a slight convulsive movement, and *all was over!*

"And so he giveth his beloved sleep," said the mother as she laid him gently on the bed. And then the long-standing tear in her eye fell upon his golden curls, followed by another, and another, as, raising her eyes to heaven, she fervently ejaculated: "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight. Not my will, but thine be done."

Annie had set the bowl containing the chrysalis, uncovered on the stand by little

Tommy's bedside, and while all the family were still gazing on his cherub face, the butterfly flew out, and after making a circuit once or twice round the room, alighted just on the corner of his snowy pillow; here it rested for a moment or two, shaking its gorgeous wings of green, purple, and gold, then escaped through the open window, and high and joyously it soared aloft in the balmy summer evening air.

Beautiful type of immortality! like the lovely boy whose blissful deliverance from earthly fetters seemed symboled in its upward flight, rejoicingly it forsook its bright outer covering so admired by all beholders, to be clothed with the glory of those radiant wings and with its singing, voiceless as the music of the spheres, it would awaken for us a note of spiritual gladness, and teach us to join its song of triumph.

"I shall awake, I shall awake, a glorious form
Of brightness and beauty to wear,
I shall burst from the gloom of my opening tomb
And breathe in the balmy air

"I shall spread my new wings to the morning sun,
On the summer's breath I'll live,
I'll bathe me where in the dewy air
The flowers their sweetness give.

"I will not touch the dusty earth,
I'll spring to the brightening sky,
And free as the breeze, wherever I please,
On joyous wings I'll fly.

"And wherever I go, timid mortals may know
That like me from the tomb they shall rise,
And the dead shall be given, by signal from heaven,
A new life and new home in the skies.

"Then let them like me make ready their shrouds,
Nor shrink from the mortal strife,
And like me they shall sing as to heaven they spring,
Death is not the end of life."

It was Saturday evening, and as night closed in, there was a hush and stillness throughout all the house, broken only by the subdued motions of the two watchers in that chamber, where in his shroud, and "wearing on his infant brow the calm majesty of death," little Tommy's beautiful form lay wrapt in that long, dreamless slumber, to be broken only by the archangel's

trumpet. Fresh flowers had again been gathered by the same busy little hands, which had decked him for his joyous birth-day feast. This time, however, they brought only *white* ones. Azaleas, camelias, Jasmines, and half-blown roses were placed in vases about the room, while in his meekly-folded hands Annie had put a single Calla-lily, *their* symbol of love, with its pure, white cup resting upon that little loved and loving breast.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE circumstance of Mrs. Lee's return to Belmont, just at the moment when her presence seemed most needful to her children, was one of those events which no child of God would be willing to attribute to blind chance; but rather to the fulfillment of the Father's promise: "I will guide thee with mine *eye*." Had she not "committed her way" unto him, trusting in these very words, and looking constantly for his direction? It was night on the vessel which was gliding over the smooth waters of the Mediterranean, an unusual hush and stillness prevailed; and all had retired to their places of rest save those whom duty called to be up and doing, or sorrow to wake and weep. Leaning upon the arm of her kind protector, the bereaved mother stood silent and still, looking with a yearning heart down into those blue waves,

which only a few hours before had opened to receive that precious form around which her arms had been so often tenderly twined, and over whose rapidly ebbing life-current she had been watching with loving and painful solicitude as day after day, under a rude canopy, upon the deck of the noisy vessel that fair and gentle one had patiently awaited the heavenly messenger who was to bear her up, far beyond all human tending. Mournfully sounded yet in her ears, those heart-breaking words: "We therefore commit her body to the deep, to be turned into corruption, looking for the resurrection of the body, when the sea shall give up her dead." With these sad memories there mingled too thoughts of the dear ones far away, and unconscious of the bereavement over which they were soon to shed such bitter tears; gradually her mind became more and more filled with a strange, shuddering apprehension on their account, and at length, with a cheek deadly pale, and a lip quivering with emotion she turned to her father-in-law, saying:

"Tell me, dear father, how I can possibly

reach my children! I feel an irresistible yearning to be with them. A strange misgiving about their welfare which seems an admonition that they need my presence."

The tone in which these words were spoken was faint and low, yet full of appealing and passionate earnestness, so different from her usually calm voice and manner, that General Lee was startled. Hour after hour he had stood in silence by her side, that she might freely give vent to the first emotions of grief, hoping that nature would presently find relief in tears; and it was very touching to see the softened and saddened expression of the old gentleman's face as he watched her with such evident anxiety and commiseration. Now he almost feared that he had done wrong in allowing her to remain thus long in a spot which was so calculated to harrow up her feelings.

"Daughter!" he said in a gentle, affectionate voice, drawing her with his arm closely to his side. "Let me lead you, now, to your cabin, or arrange a couch for you on deck, for you have been already too long without

repose. For the sake of others you must be careful not to overtask your strength."

"I will do any thing you wish, sir, if you will only first satisfy me as to the possibility of my immediate return home. There could be no rest for either mind or body while I feel this oppressive weight of anxiety, regarding the precious charge whom God has committed to my keeping. Oh! I wish I could tell you how agonizing it is to think of being detained from them, convinced as I am that they *need* me," she answered.

"Ah! my poor child, it is but your late great sorrow which has awakened these sad forebodings, and it is very natural that it should be so; but you must try to dispel your fears, they only unnerve you and torture your poor heart without cause. Think what recent tidings you have had that all was well, and do not be tempted to indulge in *unreasonable* presentiments of evil. Surely you are above *superstition!* Where is that steady calmness with which you have before this shamed the stout heart of manhood?" said her father-in-law, trying by every mo-

tive to induce her to overcome her anxious fears. But as she still remained silent, he continued in a low and hesitating tone:

"And, my child, have I not heard you say that you have intrusted them to the care of *One* whose faithfulness can never fail; has your God forsaken you in this bitter hour?"

"Oh! no, he has not forsaken me! I feel the support of his everlasting arm, and I dare not question his dealings—still, dear father, *something* speaks to me. I know not whence it comes, unless from Him to whom I have committed the guiding of my every step, and I would not—I *dare* not disregard *His* warning! Sweet had it been, else, to stand here as long as I might, gazing down into this calm, mysterious deep, cheating myself with the delusive hope of seeing once again what I have committed to its solemn keeping until *that* day 'when the sea shall give up its dead.' Let me beg you not to think me unreasonable, nor refuse what I *can not* be denied. I thought I heard a word dropped by a sailor who passed us to-night, of a vessel having been descried, and that

we should probably be compelled to lay too, for fear of coming in collision during the darkness. Will you be kind enough to inquire about this, and in case I have made no mistake, and she prove to be homeward bound, make arrangements for our return in her? I am sure you will not refuse, nor seek further to dissuade me."

"No, daughter! I certainly shall not, although I did not hear the remark you speak of. If you are right in your conjecture, I see no reason for our remaining here, and shall yield most willingly to your wishes. I was only trying to remove your groundless apprehensions concerning your children's welfare—not to detain you from them. You will, however, bear up bravely and nobly, I am sure, as you always do, still teaching us how to endure the adverse storms of fate."

"Do not say that, dear father; you are robbing God of his glory. You have seen his grace magnified in a poor weak worm of the dust, whom though he has seen fit to rebuke and chasten for her sins, he has also marvellously sustained and comforted in her

affliction, bringing her forth unharmed from the fiery surface through which it was *needful* for her to pass."

Saying this, she slipped her arm into his and motioned that she was ready to go below where her brother and sister awaited her, having thought it best to leave her for a while to her own reflections. When he had left her in their care, General Lee returned again on deck, where with his head bowed upon his breast, he paced backwards and forwards for more than an hour.

"Sins!" he murmured, as he brushed the tears from his eyes. "What sins can she have committed to draw down such judgments upon her head? This is wonderful faith, indeed! Instead of being crushed, as I feared, by such a blow, she seems to rise up stronger than ever. Ah! such religion is truly a holy and beautiful thing. But if she be punished so severely in this world for her sins, God be merciful to my poor soul hereafter! Would that the day she once predicted might indeed be coming when my tempest-tossed soul shall find such rest as

they have found who thus believe in Jesus. The prayers and tears and loving entreaties which in other days I disregarded, rush back now upon my heart. What if all too late? Would to God I had heeded them then, instead of hardening my heart and stifling the voice of conscience. Surely nothing can efface from my memory the words I lately heard: 'Remember, dear grandpa, how many are waiting for you in heaven who loved you dearly here—shall we look for you in vain when such a welcome awaits you? Will you refuse to follow those who have only gone a *little while* before?' I ought to have *led* the way, rather; but something must be done at once. I will try to pray—God hear me! God hear me!"

The future must unfold the result of these solemn meditations. Let us, however, hope that needful grace was not withheld. The vessel which had been spied that evening passed very early the next morning, and proving to be a United States packet, Mrs. Lee and her father-in-law took their passage in her. Mr. and Mrs. Ludwell insisted at

first upon accompanying them, but Mrs. Lee would not hear of it. The captain and kind-hearted sailors had been deeply affected at the fate of lovely Alice, and now with heart-felt sympathy, they bade adieu to the bereaved mother, whom they assisted into the boat which carried her to the other ship, and stood for some time looking after her with moistened eyes and heads uncovered.

When they reached their native land again, the travellers pressed eagerly on without an hours delay, and late in the evening of the eventful birthday, reached Mr. Forrest's, where General Lee insisted upon stopping until the morning; his daughter was very loth to do so, but yielded at length from a fear of wearying him, and because it would be impossible for her to reach Belmont before midnight and she did not wish to alarm the dear ones there by her sudden return at such an unseasonable hour, bringing as she did, too, such heavy tidings of sorrow. Alfred had mounted the fleetest horse in Mr. Ludwell's stable, and riding at full speed, reached his father's door a little before twelve o'clock.

Mrs. Lee was still sitting up in the lonely chamber to which she had immediately retired. At her request, she occupied the same room in which she had so recently passed the night with her sick child, and now, how every thing recalled to mind all the sufferings through which that dear one had passed, during her painful passage to the tomb! The restless, wearisome nights, the racking cough and sharp pain, were all distressingly present before her.

"Yes! ah! yes," she said in answer to her inward questionings. "There was still another idol in my heart, in spite of the many which, one after another, have been shivered by a loving Father's hand, to teach my stubborn heart submission, else I had not so vehemently striven to retain my grasp upon a life which only willful blindness prevented my seeing it was not his will to spare. 'Just and right are *all his* ways,' and I bless his holy name who teacheth me to say so, even now; but," and a look of deep and solemn stillness passed over her face, as she proceeded to probe still further the heart

which ached intensely at every touch. "What means this restless, painful anxiety about my remaining children? Surely *this* is taking unnecessary thought for the future. Have I not committed them to our Father's care? And yet these passionate throbbings tell me that I do not *trust* him. He will do what he will with his own in spite of my resistance, and shall a worm of the dust dare to lift up its head against the *Almighty!* Oh! that I could be still and know that he is God! What if the rod of chastening be yet in that hand which would willingly lay it aside had I but learned to submit?"

Trembling and weeping, she now bowed her head in silent prayer, and having humbled herself under the mighty hand of God, rose up calmly and seating herself near the open window, looked up to the same moonlight sky on which Annie had shortly before gazed with thankful love.

Peaceful, tranquillizing thoughts crept gradually into her mind. Heaven seemed so real, near, and blissful, and it was such a blessed, happy thing to remember how many

loved ones were already awaiting her there, that as she pondered it more and more deeply in her heart, faith seemed to lift her far above the earth, on the wing of strong ecstatic love, until, in the rapture of the moment, she could almost fancy that beyond that globe of light she *saw* "the land which is very far off" brought near, and heard the "new song" of those who are "walking with the Lamb in white." Her heart now kept silence, the silence of thanksgiving before God. She had no words in which to praise him for the *spiritual* blessings he had bestowed upon her loved ones, the living and the dead.

"What, cousin! are you still up?" asked Mrs. Forrest with disappointment, and almost reproachfully, when, after waiting some time, dreading to communicate Alfred's alarming intelligence concerning Tommy, she ventured at last to open the door softly and enter the room. "I hoped you would already have taken *some* sleep, as I fear you will not when you know what has brought me to your chamber," she added with a very grave, serious face.

She felt disappointed, however, to find that her words produced apparently no alarm. With eager interest Mrs. Lee bent forward to hear what she would add to this; but still with such an expression of calm quiet confidence, that her friend was at a loss how next to proceed, lest failing to prepare her sufficiently for the shock, the bad news should be too suddenly communicated. Mrs. Lee perceived her hesitation and her troubled countenance immediately.

"Tell me whatever you have to communicate, my dear Susan; do not be afraid, I can bear it now," she said in a low, subdued voice.

And when she heard of little Tommy's danger, her cheek grew paler even than before, and she seemed scarcely able to support her trembling limbs; yet she uttered not a syllable, but meekly bowed her head. When the arrangements for their instant departure were told her, she thanked her kind friends in the same low tone—her eyes expressing far more than her lips. It was near daybreak when they reached Belmont. The

physician from the village could not be found that night, but Dr. Thomson had been there nearly an hour when they arrived. From what Mrs. Banks told him of little Tommy's appearance on the day of the fall, he concluded he was then suffering from an affection of the brain, which had caused his fall from the swing, while this, in turn, had aggravated his disorder, and rendered his case still more alarming. He advised the most undisturbed quiet and rest. For this purpose the room was darkened and perfect stillness preserved, while they gently made warm applications to his feet, and cold ones to his head. There seemed, however, so little hope of his recovery, that the doctor could not make up his mind to resort to the painful trial of a blister. Once, indeed, he held the silken ringlets in his hand, which he was about to shave off for this purpose, but the lovely face overcame him, and the little throbbing, burning head lay so heavily and languidly back on his hand, that he felt it was useless to try to stop the work of the *destroyer*, which had already advanced so far, and was

going on with such fatal rapidity. When Annie awoke, the last hopeless symptoms were beginning to show themselves, and her mother had been detained from her to hear that his end was approaching, and that nothing could be done except to afford all the relief and comfort it was possible to his dying hours.

On Sunday afternoon, at the same hour on which his death had occurred, a mournful procession of playmates, relatives, and friends, followed his remains in solemn silence down the long avenue, and through the dark grove of cedar and fir trees to the little family burying-ground, where they laid him in his narrow resting-place. Poor old Jerry had refused to join the funeral train, and seemed to have taken up a strange, wild fancy that his interest in the sweet child had by some means caused his death, and brought sorrow upon his mother and sister, in whose faces he declared he could never look again. But after the grave was covered in, and the family had all returned to the house, he crept from the hiding-place where he had remained

during the reading of the burial service, and seating himself upon the little mound, gave vent to his grief in mournful and touching accents.

"Ah!" he exclaimed bitterly, striking his hands upon his breast, "if but these auld een could hae ben blinded wi' their ain saut tears before they quenched the bright light o' thine, by looking sae lovingly on thee, thou bonnie, bonnie wean! And had but this auld withered heart been forever dead and cold like the stanes above thy blessed head, before it withered the tender wee blossom wi' it's burning heat o' luve. I sud na then hae greeting and shame to see young een weepin', and the good and innocent heavy wi' mournin' for thee, because thou'se lyin' down in the deep darkness where I wad bae instead!"

And now the last labor of love for little Tommy was ended, the last care over, and the *last prayer* offered — for he no longer needed any of these. Carried like a tender lamb in the bosom of the good Shepherd, his wants were all supplied, and his prayers

turned to endless praises. But the space he had filled on earth was a blank. The little bed with its spotless coverlid, the little empty rocking-chair, the drawer of playthings and books, with the paint-box and half-finished picture, all seemed to make one feel at first as if he *must come* back. Then they brought to mind the terrible reality of those sad words: "The place which once knew him, shall know him no more." "No more!" These dirge-like words seemed to echo through the silent house, to be whispered solemnly in the soft wind which stirred the leaves and flowers, and to fall at last "like stones in an empty well," to the depths of those hearts once full of earnest, affectionate interest in his *present*, and fond, anticipating thought of his future welfare, now made void by his absence from them. Other wearers must be found for those little suits of clothing, with the neat stitches so carefully planted by proud and loving hands; but the little hat and shoes, bearing so plainly the impress of his person, with the soft auburn ringlets, were laid side by side in the drawer

with other sacred relics which the spoiler had left from former scenes of havoc, amongst the heart's treasures. To Mrs. Lee these things were but precious mementoes of *His* great goodness, who had for a time brightened her earthly home with gems destined for his own royal diadem, and then withdrawn them in order that missing their radiant adorning from the things of the *present*, she might more earnestly seek after those which are to come, and labor to be herself polished and fitted for the Master's use, in that day when he shall gather together the jewels which with his own precious blood he hath purchased for an everlasting possession. She turned, therefore, from looking on the dark shadow which death had thrown around the hearthstone, to gaze more steadfastly up to that world of light where no shadows ever fall.

CHAPTER XIX.

Mrs Lee and Annie were not unmindful of the promise which had been made for them to old Jerry. Accordingly, after having tried in vain to induce him to come to Belmont to them, they at length determined to go in search of his house. Mrs. Lee had been very sick, and still looked too pale and feeble for such an expedition. Annie offered her arm for her support, and they walked very slowly, often pausing to rest, so that Uncle Simon, who preceded them as their guide through the woods, carrying a large bundle and basket in his hand, kept too far ahead to overhear their conversation, and was obliged sometimes to seat himself on a large stone and wait until they came in sight. They passed through the garden by the same path which Jerry had come on the morning that Annie brought him up to the house

with her. It was the first time since the death of her dear little brother, that she had visited this place which had afforded such delightful occupation to his busy little hands. Near their flower-bed sat the pot containing their Calla lily, now out of bloom, and its leaves beginning to droop and wither. Annie's eyes filled with tears when she saw it, and thought of the purpose for which its last flower had been plucked. How little any of her young companions or herself had anticipated *this* on that happy morning when they were choosing their emblematic plants! The beautiful variagated Canterbury bell was still in full bloom, but a late shower had prostrated some of its slender stalks.

"Dear, sweet little flower," said Annie, as she stooped to fix them on a prop, "how dearly I shall always love you for *his* sake. Mother, he loved these flowers so much, and when I tried to explain what Mrs. Banks meant by her name for them, 'Family Harmony,' and what she said about the chiming of the bells, love, peace, gentleness, and humility, in the family circle, he smiled so

sweetly, and asked me if they were not the bells papa heard in his home; and when some of the children were quarrelling one evening, he ran and pulled a piece and shook it very hard, to see if the 'wittle angels wouldn't wing the faiwy bells,' he said. How do you think they could have grown here so suddenly, mother? Isn't it very strange? Fannie thought we might have dropped some seed without knowing it, but Uncle Lemuel says they don't bloom the first year, and besides these were large and in bud when we first saw them. I am so glad that they were put here at any rate, now."

"It must have been done by some one intending a pleasant surprise, my darling; but who it was, of course I can not say. *I* am very glad, too, however, since they gave our little darling so much pleasure. Ah! how much he could tell us now about the harmony of heaven, that joyful music ever sounding, without a moment's pause, or a single jarring note. It was a good thought in dear old Mrs. Banks to try to teach you all to connect the study of God's word with

his beautiful works in the world of nature; for they are meant to be interpreters of each other," answered Mrs. Lee; and for some time after this, they walked on in silence, for Annie found that her mother preferred this, and was very careful not to disturb her reflections.

Uncle Simon took down all the bars, and cleared the path most carefully for them, though he did not at all approve of their taking such a walk, just for old Jerry Thrip. After a while he halted until they came up to him, and pointing with his finger to a miserable, dilapidated old hovel, in the midst of the woods, with no inclosure round it, said to Mrs. Lee:

"Dere's de place, madam; but you see it look fitter for cattle to live in, dan it do for people. Ef you'd please to set down here on dis big rock a little while, I'll go tell de ol' man to come out to you, and save you de trouble of going any further."

"Never mind, Uncle Simon; I would rather go to the house myself, I think," she replied.

"Excuse me, ma'am, for *resisting* upon it so, but indeed I thinks you'd better not; it an't no place for de likes o' you to go in, and I kin so easy fetch him out."

His persuasions, however, were useless; and he was obliged to lead them to the entrance, a low opening, covered with an old door, broken off its hinges, and propped up against the wall on the inside. As no one replied to Uncle Simon's loud rap, after waiting some minutes they entered. It was very dark and still in there, and Uncle Simon, after searching about for the window, or some place through which light might be admitted, at length succeeded in moving aside several rough planks, which supplied the deficiency of both shutter and sash. And never shone the light of day upon a scene of more dreary and squalid wretchedness. Both Annie and her mother felt sick at heart as they glanced from side to side, in the vain hope of finding relief in some quarter of this woful-looking abode. In several places the broken roof permitted a view of the sky, and it was plain, from the appearance of every

thing, that the late rains had had free admission. A few planks in one corner of the room kept an old mattress from the damp earthen floor. The bed-clothes, which were both soiled and torn, were thrown in a confused heap to one side, showing large rents in the ticking, with tufts of coarse, sharp straw sticking out. There was one chair, which could boast four legs and part of the back; several stools roughly manufactured from blocks of wood, a long table, apparently from the same shop, with one of its legs so much shorter than the rest, that it was necessary to support it against the wall, or risk the sliding off of the scanty stock of common delf ware arranged upon it.

"Well, I'se hearn *tell* of dis place, but I never *seed* it afore! I wonder what *kind* of an ol' critter he is, any how, to live in sich a a hole? My master's cattle would turn up their noses at it. Dere an't no place 'tall I kin ax you ladies to take a seat. I mighty feared you be sick again, madam," said Uncle Simon, looking with much anxiety and concern at Mrs. Lee's pale face.

"No; I hope the walk will rather do me good," she answered with a faint smile, quickly followed by a sigh and a look of disappointment, as she added, "but I am very sorry the old man is not at home. I think, Annie, we will wait awhile, and see if he will return."

"But, mother, you will be *so* tired if you stand so long, and as Uncle Simon says, this room is not fit for you to stay in. Suppose you let him fix one of these seats in a sheltered spot for you."

"That is percisely what I was gwine to do, Miss Annie, dough it an't fit for my mistus till I gives it a good cleaning," replied the old servant, taking up a stool and wiping it all over with his pocket-handkerchief, with an air of politeness and gallantry that would have done credit to a courtly cavalier. When a large oak tree had been found, which Annie thought just the thing for her purpose, the stool was placed under it in such a way that her mother might lean back for support against its massive trunk.

"And now," said Uncle Simon, placing

another beside it, "dere's one for young mistus, too."

"Thank, you, Uncle Simon; but before I rest I've got plenty of work for you and me, too," said Annie. Then whispering a few words in her mother's ear, she ran back to the hovel, followed by the servant.

"Now, Uncle Simon, suppose we surprise old Jerry by fixing up his room while he's gone, so when he comes back, if we are not here, he won't know what to make of it. Wouldn't you like to clean it up a little for me? Sweep the floor and make the bed, you know."

"I'd like to do any thing my little mistus wants," said old Simon, "but how I gwine to sweep dout a broom, I wonder?"

"Oh! yes, I forgot that; but I know you can make it look nicer some way or other."

"Miss Annie, you jes' go set down by your ma, please, miss, a little while, and I'll *derange* all about de broom, and you'll see wonders in dis ol' hole when I gives you notice to return."

Annie smiled, and did as he requested her,

and with a hearty good will the kind-hearted old soul went to work. First, he made a kind of broom, which answered pretty well for the dirt floor, by tying branches closely together; then moving out every article of furniture, even to the would-be bedstead and bed, he thoroughly swept, then dusted and replaced every thing, and even went so far as to garnish the fire-place with green boughs, chuckling and carrying on in quite an animated tone of voice, an imaginary conversation between little Miss Annie and himself, in which she was made to express the greatest amount of wonder and delight, while he, with one hand resting on his side, looked round with a grin of complacent satisfaction, and shook his head knowingly, saying:

"Thought Simon knowed how to please his good little Miss Annie."

When every thing was fixed as well as he thought possible, he went to call the young lady, assuming an air of humility intended to heighten the surprise which awaited her.

"Hopes you'll find things putty tolable, Miss Annie; but you know taint easy to git

blood out a turnup, and it seem putty much like *dat* to try to make *dat* place look more genteeler."

"Why, Uncle Simon! it's splendid compared to what it was," said Annie. "I am so much obliged to you for taking so much pains."

"You's very welcome, Miss Annie," he answered, with his whole face beaming with delight at his success. "You see, lettin' in de fresh are and scrapin' up the damp clay off de floor have kept it from havin' sich a a bad, cellarish kind of smell. But *here's* what gin me more trouble an anything else—dis ol' table what set so cranksidy, less it lean up agin de wall. Fust I thought I couldn't do nothing 'tall with it; but knowed you never want to see it set dat hobble-de-gee fashion, so says I, *sumpin* got to be done bout *dis*, *any how*. Den I thought bout de nails what mas' Frank gin me to mend my garden-palins, an' I found um safe in my pocket; after dat 'twas easy 'nough to know what to do; so I jes nailed on dis leg what was fallin' out, and put a block o' wood under it to

make it long as tother's, and see how handy it sits up, an' holds de *chaney* snug, too."

"That's the very thing, for now I am going to put some dinner on it for old Jerry when he comes back. Where's the basket of provisions, Uncle Simon?"

"Here 'tis, miss! but don' know whar you gwine to find things to hold all what in it, an't no more 'an *three* plates—one mug, and a broken one—a saucer and dis pitcher, 'dout a handle, as I kin see."

Annie looked perplexed. After having placed a loaf of bread on one plate, a cold ham on another, there was only one more, which must be reserved for old Jerry to eat out of.

"Oh! my little table is all spoiled for want of things to hold his food. I wonder what he uses every day; he must have a tea-pot; here is a rusty old kettle, to be sure, but how can I make him tea without a tea-pot?" she said.

"Guess he never haves none hisself, here; but he'll enjoy your bottle o' milk, Miss Annie, may be more 'an the tea, as *it* mought

be cole when he gits it. There an't any way of *containing* the heat in it you see."

Annie was obliged to content herself with leaving most of the supplies on a corner of the table in paper bundles, but she had managed to make his dinner the most inviting-looking feast Jerry had sat down to for a long time. The table was covered with a snowy napkin, and some bunches of green laurel in the middle set off every thing very much.

"Miss Annie, boun I seed sumpin' as I went down to de spring would surprise you. De ol' gentleman got a garden down dere, sure as you born!" said Uncle Simon as he returned from filling the pitcher with fresh water.

"Where is it? I should like so much to see it," said Annie, much interested.

Uncle Simon led the way down the hill, and there, sure enough, was a plot of ground under a mossy bank by the spring, which was evidently cultivated as a flower-garden. In the centre was a large sweet-briar bush, around it some blue flags, and dotted about in different places a few other wild flowers;

but in a corner off by itself, were several rows of Canterbury Bells! At seeing this, Annie's face became more thoughtful and sad.

"Ah! now I understand all about it," she said half-aloud, plucking at the same time a little sprig to show her mother.

"That's what I thought of directly, myself," said Uncle Simon.

Mrs. Lee was much touched at Annie's description of the little garden, and agreed with her, that there was little doubt that now the mystery about their plants was solved. They had waited so long in vain for old Jerry's return that she thought it useless to remain longer, and rose to go.

"My daughter, you have succeeded in making wonderful improvements in the old man's house," she said, as Annie pointed out, with great animation, what Uncle Simon and herself had been doing. "And you seem, my dear child, to be enjoying already in anticipation your reward for the pains you have been taking to make another happy; but I am sorry you can not *see* the pleasure

you will doubtless give. We must lay the suit of new clothes on this chair, and wait for another opportunity of telling him, for whose sake we wish him to accept and wear them," she added with a sigh.

On the way home they saw old Jerry at a distance coming towards them, apparently walking with difficulty, but as soon as he caught a glimpse of the ladies, making an effort, he quickened his pace, and went off in another path through the woods, very much to their disappointment. That evening Uncle Simon was dispatched from Belmont to his house on another errand; this time he carried the bedstead and mattress, on which little Tommy had once slept, with some clean covering. When he returned, he reported that he found the old man walking up and down before his hovel, wringing his hands and talking to himself. Upon seeing the contents of the cart, he would hardly allow them to be carried in, saying:

"Oh! tak' it a' back, an' tell the gude ladie it's na use trying to cross ill-luck. There's nane ever I luved but sorrow or

death was sure to come upon them. Yet for a' that, there's mony, mony thanks in here (laying his hand upon his breast) to her cannie heart, and I'd joy ony day to powre out it's reddest bluid for her."

Uncle Simon, however, was not to be deterred from obeying all his orders to the very letter; accordingly, without replying to his objections, he quietly proceeded to put up the bedstead and spread the new mattress with the clean sheets, etc. He then, with the same quiet gravity, hung up the little curtain Annie had hemmed for the window, threw into his cart the pile of filthy straw and rags which had composed Jerry's couch, and with a broad grin on his face, drove off, leaving the old man seated on a stool, watching him with a vacant, bewildered stare.

These comforts seemed to have arrived just at the most fortunate moment, too, for that very night poor Jerry was seized with a violent attack of inflammatory rheumatism, and when Annie came again to see him a few days afterwards, with Mrs. Banks, they

found him tossing wearily upon his bed, racked with pain, and parched with feverish thirst, without a creature to aid him. When they entered he was raving in wild delirium, as if driving off some frightful image which would force itself upon his vision; as soon, however, as Annie spoke to him in her sweet, gentle voice, his countenance softened, and with a smile, he began talking of a "little angel with sunshine around his head, and looking down upon him with luve and kindness in his bonnie blue een." Then he muttered in a very sad voice, too low to be distinctly heard, something about his "puir wife and her pale face and toiling white fingers, and the twa bairns, Willie and Mary, resting together under the green turf in the auld kirkyard at Kilmarnock, with the flowers bloomin' aboon their bonnie heads."

His visitors were deeply moved at his suffering condition, and did every thing they could to alleviate his pain; but in that forlorn dwelling it was hard to find any way of rendering him more comfortable. Mrs. Lee, therefore, had him immediately conveyed to

Belmont, called in medical advice, and with Mrs. Banks's and Annie's assistance, nursed him day and night most tenderly. For some time he was too ill to be conscious of any thing that was done for him, but by and by, the fever began to yield to the remedies of the physician, and he seemed to be much puzzled at finding himself in a strange place. As Mrs. Lee approached him with a glass of cooling drink, and kindly inquired how he did, he covered his face with his hands, and murmured in a feeble, broken voice:

"Alak! alak! it sud na bae that God's holy saunts sud came to wait upon a puir sinful carl!"

Another time he motioned her back, saying:

"Na! ladie, it's na fittin' *indeed!* it is na fittin' me to tak' it frae *your* hand."

But when he found that resistance was useless, and the good lady persisted in her kind care and attention, in spite of his remonstrances, he at length quietly submitted, but his eyes would follow her wherever she moved with an expression of mingled rever-

ence, gratitude, and devotion. As soon as he was able to listen and understand her words, she talked to him of Jesus, (redeeming little Tommy's pledge,) telling him how freely he had been ransomed with the blood of atonement, and how easily the vilest and the meanest might be embraced in the covenant of mercy. For some time he heard her in profound silence, betraying only by the tears which stole down his furrowed cheek the emotion he felt. When alone, however, he sometimes muttered to himself such words as these:

"Ah! yes; if her heart caud melt wi' sae muckle luve and pity for the sufferings of this puir wretched body—sae miserable, despised and scorned—that she wad cam' hersel', great and beautiful as she is, and cure it wi' the touch of her ain lily hand—I can na surely believe too muckle of the Gude Master who taught her how to feel for the wretched, and mad' her heart sae different frae the hearts of most ither folks. But oh! *she* kens nane of the woe and sin that's deep here within this heart o' mine."

His writhing features would betray at other times the great struggle which seemed to be passing in his mind, and he would despairingly exclaim:

"Na! na! it's a' to na use, for I'm still greetin' at the blessed words, exceptin' ye forgive, ye can na' bae forgiven."

CHAPTER XX.

ALTHOUGH, after a few weeks, the violence of poor Jerry's disease was subdued, it seemed very doubtful whether he would have strength to rally from its effects. With sure but gradual steps, the outcast wanderer was apparently drawing near the "bound of life where we lay our burdens down." And the young people at Belmont, touched with pity, now vied with each other in showing, by acts of kind, thoughtful attention, their sympathy in his sufferings, as well as their regret for the injustice they had once done to his character. Alfred frankly said:

"I shall always know, now, that Mrs. Banks and my little cousin's way is the best. Never to take evil for granted about any one, on account of their looks, and rather to *waste* kindness on the unworthy, than run the risk of wronging the innocent."

Every day, good, motherly Mrs. Banks came with her prescriptions and her drinks; and with the same humble, thankful look with which she always summed up her own mercies, she reminded him of God's goodness, and urged him to be thankful for the past, and trust Him for the future.

"As for me," she said one day, "if the time should ever come, when I see nothing but darkness and sorrow in the present, I should just close my eyes, and find enough to do in calling to mind all the wonderful love and mercy of my *past* life; so it was that David could always find a word of praise, for the ending of his bitterest complaints."

Jerry bowed his head, and answered:

"Ay, mistress, as you say, there's muckle love, muckle mercy, and muckle grace, to think on; but then there's mair an' enough of sin and sorrow, for a' that. I'se try to mind me of the future; but nane of the past has light for me."

Annie loved dearly to bring her little Bible and read to him chapters, which she had first read to her mother, and heard her

explain, and sing him her favorite hymns and those she used to sing to her little brother, while the old man would express to her more freely than to any one else all his doubts and fears, as well as every feeble hope as it sprung up in his mind. She had kindly gathered for him the seed of his Canterbury bell, and wept while he told her about his "wee winsome Mary," and how she had loved this flower, because a kind ladie gave it to her; but how, when he had gone to the wars in India, she died, and so when he came back, there was "naething in his *ain lond belonging* to him, but three graves in the *auld kirkyard;* that he caud *bide there nae langer*, but when he hod dug up a little root, to cherish for their sakes, had crossed the wide seas never to return. With his eyes fixed upon the little paper seed-bag, suspended from a nail near his bed, he would beg her again and again to read him the 15th chapter of 1st Corinthians, and to say her "ain sweet wards afterwards." In her simple, childlike language, she would then explain, how like the springing of the seed

from the soil would be the resurrection of our bodies, and talk to him of the blessedness of those whom God has taken to his *rest*, who will no more return to us, but wait to welcome us into their blissful habitation, though changed and glorified, still the same we loved on earth, and may continue to love throughout eternity. And so from her, poor Jerry learned to believe that the little germ of immortality which he had left buried in the green hillock of his native land, would meet him again, in a more genial clime, blooming in richer, fairer beauty, yet be the *same*, the *very same little Mary* over whose poor dust he had shed so many tears.

For many weeks the old man lingered, suffering little pain, but showing in his emaciated frame and wasting strength that the old soldier's last battle was nigh fought, and the City of Rest, in which is heard no more the voice of the oppressor, not far off. At last, with the first cold winds of autumn and the changing leaves, his final summons came, and, in his turn, the humble, docile pupil had now a lesson to *impart*—that deep-

ly impressive lesson, which the dying teach the living in that hour when the solemn *realities* of life and death are unveiled before us; when heart and flesh fail, and we feel that none but the eternal God can be the soul's refuge in this *last extremity.* Every trace of anxiety and trouble had been for some time passing from the old man's face, and an expression of meek, tranquil joy succeeding, when one evening, as Mrs. Lee, perceiving that he was much iller than he had been, was preparing to sit up by him herself during the night, he motioned her to draw nearer, that he might make himself heard as he expressed his last wish. "There's been great fightin' warks here, dear ladie," he murmured, laying his hand upon his heart, "but thonks to ye a' who taught me, and mair thanks to him that sent ye. I've found the end o' it a' at last, an now I'm his whose precious bluid bought me, an' hae naething mair to do but praise him for evermair. The red sodger's claes is laid by, an' I think nae langer of ony wrongs, but I *crave* to bear my Master's name and mark upon

me, before I go to meet his blessed face. Only I wad na ask *too muckle*," he added diffidently. Mrs. Lee immediately promised to gratify his wish if possible, and the next morning sent for a clergyman who chanced to be visiting a friend in the neighborhood. He came at quite an early hour, and all the family were assembled in the room of the dying man. The pallor of death was on his face, but it was radiant with joy, as the minister of Jesus, marking on his brow *his* sacred symbol, pronounced the words which fell gratefully upon his dying ear: "We receive this person into the congregation of *Christ's flock*, and do sign him with the sign of the cross." When he had received, together with the little band of Christian friends around him, the memorials of a Saviour's dying love, and the sweet assurance was read, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life," "My Saviour's ain sweet, blessed words," he faintly articulated with a smile, adding, "and I forgive as freely as I hae ben forgiven." Then with a part-

ing look to his kind friends, full of grateful love, he rested upon "the *Everlasting arm*," which bore him safely over the dark river, and opened to him the gates of that "Beautiful City," where, with inaudible footfalls, walk the followers of Him who was meek and lowly in heart, and where still stand, as of old, "the great multitude which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, and palms in their hands, and worship God, saying: Blessing and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor and power and might be unto our God, forever and ever. Amen."

CHAPTER XXI.

THE spring and summer have each successively come and gone since our readers were first introduced to the family at Belmont, and now the bright tints of autumn are beginning to fade before the more stern and sombre face of winter. But during these eventful months the little Ludwells had witnessed sadder changes than those of the varying seasons. Their first tears had been shed for a more serious cause than that of some passing disappointment or trivial wound; for the first time death had presented itself to them as a *reality*, and the sad moral, "In the midst of life we are in death," had hushed for a while, with its startling sound, their merry games and happy plays. Childhood's sorrows, however, from whatever cause, are proverbially short, and the elastic spring of youth had rebounded before this to its old

place, so that the laugh and jest and merry song echoed through the house as loudly as ever. Occasionally, indeed, a thoughtful shade would cross some young face, as impelled by a suddenly awakened recollection, it sought once more to unravel the great mystery it had witnessed—*the parting of soul and body.*

Upon the evening, however, when we invite you to step with us, for the last time, into the comfortable dining-room, every shadow seems to have been banished, and an unmingled glow of happy anticipation is visible in their countenances. The bright hickory fire is throwing warm, cheering, inviting-looking beams upon the furniture, arranged with scrupulous and unusual regard to order and taste. There can scarcely be a mistake in the inference drawn from these circumstances regarding the event which is so joyfully expected. Yes, if you could interpret the language of those little throbbing hearts, you might hear them say, with each successive beat:

"I am so happy, because mamma and

papa are coming, *certainly coming.* Coming, coming, coming!"

Henry and George are at the farthest gate of the plantation, using both eyes and ears to catch the first indication of the travellers being at hand; when they have promised to hurrah so loud that the party within doors shall hear them immediately—they having at length, with difficulty found occupations sufficiently absorbing to quiet for a while their impatient restlessness. The Forrests have returned home; but Mrs. Banks seems so firmly established amongst them, that no one thinks of her ever going away. She sits now in a corner of the hearth, holding Phebe on her knee, and singing to her a favorite melody from Mother Goose, about the man that jumped into the bramble-bush, and scratched out both his eyes; while the child, with Mina, her pet tortoise-shell kitten, in her lap, laughs aloud, and threatens to use poor pussy's own paws to dispossess her of a pair of sharp, cunning little green eyes, which peer knowingly and stealthily about. In the middle of the rug, Charlie has seated himself, with a

little basket of hickory-nuts, off which he is stripping the outer bark with both teeth and fingers, giving, now and then, amused attention to Mrs. Banks and her merry rhymes. Not far from the fire sits Mrs. Lee at a little stand, on which there is a glass of delicate flowers, which she is copying with her water-colors into Susy's sketch-book. Her hand moves along with graceful rapidity, leaving a beautiful imitation of each little flower traced on the blue or rose-colored leaf, Susy standing all the while close to her elbow, watching the progress of her work with intense admiration and delight. The rest are all gathered around grandpa, who sits near the window, with a little round table before him, on which he has placed his microscope, and some curious leaves and insects they are examining with it. The old gentleman looks down with benevolent pleasure upon his grandchildren, very much gratified at the interest they manifest in his explanations and remarks, and they enjoy quite as much as ever his genial society. He has been absent from Belmont an unusually

long time, for which they have just been calling him to account, and while doing this in most frolicsome spirit, scarcely one of them fails to notice in his manner more of softness than it was wont to have, as well as a certain degree of gentle gravity, blended with the former kind, cheerful tone of his conversation, and more than once several pairs of eyes have been wonderingly fastened upon him, when, during the course of their microscopical observations, he has paused to point out with reverent and earnest eloquence, the wisdom and goodness of the great Creator.

These several pleasant little groups are broken up by the sound of the signal-shout, which presently rings through the air, echoed again and again from different parts of the plantation. Instantly the room was deserted by the delighted children, who rushed eagerly down the long avenue, to meet the carriage, giving loud expression to their feelings all the way. Annie and her mother alone lingered together by one of the large pillars of the portico. They were both very pale and trembled very much as the moment of meet-

ing drew near. Ah! could they keep back that rush of feeling as they thought of *all* that had happened during those months of separation? Yet not for the world would they have cast one shadow on the joyous moment of reünion; and bravely they struggled to gain the mastery over themselves, and, thinking only of others, to fulfill the Scripture precept: "Rejoice with those that do rejoice." As soon as Mr. Ludwell saw the children, he ordered Thomas to stop, and jumping out, ran to meet them. One after another was folded in his warm, tender, fatherly embrace; then followed a rush to the door and steps of the carriage, to kiss dear mamma, whose glowing cheeks and animated countenance spoke very favorably for the effects of her journey. Clara, and as many more as could be squeezed into the carriage, rode with her up to the door, while Mr. Ludwell and the three eldest boys walked on rapidly together. Grandpa was standing at the end of the gravel-walk, ready to welcome back the wanderers.

"Why, Emmy!" he exclaimed, looking

with satisfaction at his daughter's improved appearance, after the first warm greetings were exchanged, "you look like yourself again, sure enough. It is amazing! a restoration far more complete than I had dared to hope for. May we be as thankful as we should be. And as for you, Edward," he added, turning to Mr. Ludwell, and shaking his hand warmly, "you look as if a winter's hard work were absolutely needed to reduce you to reasonable dimensions."

"I have a first-rate chance then in prospect," answered Mr. Ludwell, laughing, "for my business has accumulated during my long holiday to an almost frightful amount. Ah! here is good Mrs. Banks. I'm delighted to see your kind face once more; the appearance of the children speaks volumes in praise of your good care of them. I never saw little Phebe so robust before; but Mother Banks always had a way of working miracles upon young folks," he continued, stooping to kiss, with a son's dutiful affection, the old nurse who had acted almost a mother's part successively to himself and his little ones.

With a deep sigh, he glanced now towards his sister, whom he hastened to meet, and nothing could have been more touching than the tender sympathy of both Mr. and Mrs Ludwell to Annie and herself. It was some time before they were sufficiently composed, after this interview, to receive the congratulations and welcomes which still awaited them from the servants, who were crowded in the wide hall, waiting to speak to them, testifying with their own tongues how glad it made them to have master and mistus back.

Even old Aunt Mindy had hobbled up from her cabin, and stood leaning on her tall staff, while Uncle Lemuel had donned again his shorts and tights, and filled his mouth with many long-winded compliments, clothed in the most pedantic language he could muster, from his limited acquaintance with the world of letters. An early and sumptuous supper came after a while, to tempt the appetites of the travellers after their long ride.

"Mother, won't you sit at the head yourself, now that you are well?" asked Henry,

upon seeing Clara take that place as she had before been accustomed to do.

"Yes, my son; I hope I have come back strong enough for all my duties. But sister Clara thinks she will spare me all fatigue on this first night; so you see she is making a visitor of me," his mother answered cheerfully.

"Edward, may I ask a blessing?" General Lee asked, as the family were about to be seated.

Mr. Ludwell started with surprise at this unusual suggestion, but instantly checking himself, answered with grave respect: "Certainly, sir." At the same time he motioned to such of the children as had already seated themselves to rise again, and the old gentleman, standing in the midst of his descendants, with his venerable head bowed, and his hands lifted to invoke a blessing upon them, looked like one of the patriarchs of old. To the looks of inquiry and astonishment which his grandchildren were casting upon him, he returned a frank, kind smile as he said:

"Better late than never, my dears. Don't

you think so? Grandpa, you see, has at last found a safe harbor for his poor shattered bark, so long tossed upon an angry sea. He has tried for many years living without God in the world, but found that *it* contained nothing which could satisfy the cravings of an immortal creature, and so in the eleventh hour he resolved to go right to the Lord Jesus, and offer to become a *laborer* in *his* vineyard; and strange as it may seem, his poor unworthy services have been accepted. He has been welcomed, indeed, not as a servant, but as an adopted child into the household of God, and is ever ready to exclaim: 'Because thy loving kindness is better than life, my lips shall praise thee!' Now when he tells you what great joy he finds, himself, in this new relation to our heavenly Father, will you wonder that he desires more than any thing in the world to see those whom he loves best made equally happy? Take warning, my dear little ones, by these gray hairs, and don't do as I have done—leave only the last hour of life to be spent in the enjoyment of real solid peace and comfort.

How I wish some *one* of you, at least, would this very night come and lay your hand in mine as a token of your determination to take at once a stand for God in the world, and become an 'heir of the grace of life.'"

Mrs. Ludwell rose as he finished speaking, and gliding softly to her father's side, laid her hand in his, saying:

"Receive mine as the *first* pledge, dear father, for you have brought my halting, doubting mind at length to a conclusion; and I can say to-night, that I am *resolved* that, by God's grace, I will be henceforth wholly devoted to his service and live for his glory."

It would be in vain to attempt a description of the effect which this scene produced; enough that it was one which the youngest child present could never forget. When the evening which was spent in tranquil happiness had drawn to a close, and they were about to separate for the night, the old family Bible, so long unused, was brought out once more, and placed before General Lee, who opened it with a trembling hand, and read the first twelve verses of the 32d chap-

ter of Deuteronomy, pausing with deep emotion on the fourth verse. "He is a *rock;* his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment; a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he." He then offered a short, simple, childlike prayer, fervently committing the whole household to the care of the Good Shepherd of Israel; and so was the family altar of Belmont again set up this first evening of their meeting together again, after a separation which had been most strikingly marked by the interposition of God's hand, plainly showing that he indeed hath power to "kill and to make alive, to *wound* and to *heal.*"

"My dear Annie," said General Lee, in a low voice to his daughter-in-law, as he bade her good-night, "I have not thanked you yet for your instrumentality in my present happiness. Your prayers and your faith have not been in vain, you see; and neither, let me add, has your example failed to impart its lesson. God bless you, my child!"

A thanksgiving was offered up that night by Mrs. Lee, in her closet, such as *only they*

can offer who have long watched, waited, and prayed for the conversion of a beloved friend, when at last the clouds of error and prejudice are dispelled, and the clear beams of the sun of righteousness begin to cast their heavenly radiance around his pathway. And good Mrs. Banks lay down to rest, full of thankful hope as she looked forward to the fulfillment of her best wishes and most earnest prayers for the dear Belmont Family.

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